Hafa Adai!

Sponsors donate over 40 bags, boxes of toys to Karidat. » PAGE 3

Store worker stops man from allegedly stealing beer. » PAGE 5

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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'Mailman told cop to put gun down'

» Lawyer says Vitug highly skilled paralegal, devoted mother

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Attorney Bruce L. Mailman asked Police Officer Christopher S. Santos to put down his service gun before the officer fatally shot Joanna T. Vitug and then himself, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

Multiple sources disclosed that when Mailman saw Santos holding a gun, he tried to get the officer to put down his firearm.

Saipan Tribune asked Mailman about it but he refused to comment.

See MAILMAN on Page 4

ANOTHER PUERTO RICO DUMP?
Rota's only dumping site is starting to resemble the Puerto Rico Dump on Saipan. These photos taken yesterday show the overflowing mountains of trash at the Tatachong dumping site on the southern island. According to Rota residents, the site has been that way for several years now, and government officials have done little to address the issue of the crowded dumping area.

FOR TIMELY FILED CW1 RENEWALS

Kilili: USCIS finalizing rule on 240-day grace period

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Sablan

The proposal to have Commonwealth-only workers, or CW1 workers, be allowed to continue working for up to 240 days or eight months while their CW permit renewal applications are being processed is now being finalized.

This was according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), who told *Saipan Tribune* that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services informed him that the proposed 240-

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Sustained drop in Japan arrivals worries industry

» Tenorio: CNMI will not lose Japan market

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Despite the consistent increase in visitor arrival numbers in the last few months, the tally coming from the CNMI's original source market, Japan, is dropping at a fast clip. Marianas

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AFTER YEARS OF APPARENT NONCOMPLIANCE

NMC to issue tax credit forms for students next year

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

It appears the students of the Northern Marianas College have never been issued their 1098-Ts—tuition statements that may have allowed them to avail of a potential thousands of dollars in tax credits, tuition refunds, fee and tuition deductions, and other benefits for the educational costs they've paid out during a tax year.

While the college is set on issuing the forms early next year, it remains unclear as to why they have not done so in years past. The 1098-Ts allow students to avail of either the American Op-

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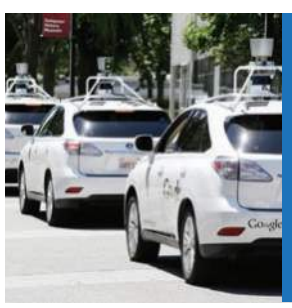

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California's Department of Motor Vehicles tries to figure out if "driverless" vehicles are safe.
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The gunman who fatally ambushed two police officers had a long criminal record.
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LIFE & STYLE
How do you joke about the Sony hacking? A little carefully.
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Local

IN LAWSUIT BY MAYOR STAFF WHO FELL FROM BUCKET TRUCK

Fleming's claims vs Saipan Mayor's Office is dismissed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho dismissed yesterday all claims against the Office of the Mayor of Saipan in the lawsuit filed by its staff who is suing over the injuries he suffered when a bucket truck's arm suddenly broke while he was cutting the branches of tree, making him fall several feet to the rooftop of a building.

In the same 13-page order, Camacho denied the Office of the Attorney General's motion to dismiss Lawrence M. Fleming's claims against the CNMI government. The judge ruled that the Commonwealth is the proper defendant in this case and a claim may not also be brought against the Mayor's Office stemming from the same subject.

"Accordingly, the Mayor's Office's motion to dismiss is granted," the judge said.

Camacho said because there is no chartered municipality of Saipan, employees of the Mayor's Office are employees of the Commonwealth for the purposes of the Government Liability Act.

"This claim was presented to the Attorney General, and claims against the Commonwealth are the exclusive remedy for damages caused by the negligence of Commonwealth employees acting within the scope of their employment," he said.

Fleming is suing the Office of the Mayor of Saipan, CNMI government, and the administrator of the estate of former Saipan Mayor Donald G. Flores, for negligence and worker's compensation.

Fleming, through counsel Joseph E. Horey, asked the court to hold the defendants liable to pay him damages for pain, suffering, and emotional distress. He also demanded payment for court costs and attorney's fees.

The government requested to substitute in for the estate of Flores. The court earlier granted the motion and dismissed all claims against the estate.

The Commonwealth, through assistant attorney general David Lochabay, filed a motion to dismiss the claims against the government for lack of jurisdiction and failure to state a claim.

The Office of the Mayor of Saipan, through counsel Samuel I. Mok, moved to dismiss the claims against the office for lack of jurisdiction.

In his opposition, Fleming, through counsel Horey, argued that the Commonwealth is the only proper defendant in this case. Horey asserts that the employees covered under the Gov-

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Business license fees now apply to each location

Props, sponsors donate over 40 bags, boxes of toys to Karidat

JAYSON CAMACHO

Representative-elect Ed Propst (far left) and Karidat Social Services acting director Lauri Ogumoro, along with the Division of Youth Services staff and administrator Vivian Sablan (second from right), have their picture taken with the over 40 bags and boxes of toys donated yesterday morning at their office in Chalan Kanoa. Toys that were donated will be given to Karidat's clients' children and the Division of Youth Services children.

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Karidat Social Services received a pallet of toys and canned food yesterday morning at the Karidat Center in Chalan Kanoa, thanks to the help of representative-elect Ed Propst and other generous donors.

Propst, who said they first organized the toy drive four years ago but hadn't sponsored Karidat in the past three years, said they made up for it this year with over 40 bags and boxes of toys donated by sponsors.

"This year we decided to organize it and asked other sponsors because Karidat mentioned that they did not have any sponsors so we took it on ourselves to become sponsors and organize it and included different sponsors," Propst said.

The other sponsors are *Marianas Variety,* KKMP, Joeten Ent., Lollipops, YCO Liberty Plaza, Foremost Scoops and *Beach Road* Magazine, Toothworks, Java Joes Saipan, Manuel T. Vilaga, Dr. John Doyle, Pat and Susan Castro-Cabrera, Amelia Manibusan and family, Bridgette Camacho and Lil' Miss December 8 Queen Kassidy and family, Kagman High School, Gloria-Dom Palacios and family, Juanette David-Atalig and family, Michelle Hamilton and Jeffrey Tomokane and family, Florence Sablan, Valerie Reyes and family, Godfathers (Scott Dottino and Ron Biggers), and Jean Sablan.

Karidat acting director Lauri Ogumoro was very pleased and said that they will sponsor DYS as well.

"DYS has a lot of kids and they didn't have anybody sponsoring anybody this year so between the Salvation Army and Karidat, DYS is going to be covered because we are trying to blanket the island with toys for the kids who are less fortunate and we're so thankful to Propst," Ogumoro said, adding that it wasn't the first time that Propst sponsored a toy drive for Karidat.

Ogumoro also said that all the canned food drive is done in December.

"What we are doing is packaging the food for the people who come to the center and ask for canned food donations and now we are thankful that we keep up the replenishing from the schools and the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality. What we are doing is that any family who ask for food, we'll package up a care package and they can walk away with canned food as soon as they come in," Ogumoro said.

Division of Youth Services administrator Vivian Sablan said they are happy and pleased with Karidat for sponsoring the toys for children under their program.

"I am very grateful because we have good community partners like Karidat and we have been working alongside with them for other services too, so with the holidays we try to work with the family and make them feel the joy of the Christmas spirit," Sablan said.

She said a lot of the children they serve will be happy this Christmas. The toys will be given to those under the DYS Child Protection Unit, the shelter, and Parents Anonymous.

Sablan noted that they will also be getting toys from the Salvation Army and that they will include Rota and Tinian as well this year.

FLEMING

From Page 2

ernment Liability Act include elected officials and employees of any "public entity," and that the Mayor's Office is a public entity pursuant to the statute.

Horey argues that the Act would apply to the Mayor's Office employees, whether or not Saipan is a chartered municipality.

In his order, Camacho said Fleming met the presentment requirements of a statute by presenting the current claim to the AG, even though the claim was described as a claim against the "Office of the Mayor of Saipan."

"Under the Government Liability Act, a lawsuit that alleges negligence of employees of the Office of the Mayor of Saipan is a negligence lawsuit against the Commonwealth," said Camacho in denying the government's motion to dismiss.

With respect to the Mayor's Office's motion to dismiss, Camacho said the court clearly has jurisdiction, or the authority to adjudicate claims arising from the Government Liability Act so long as they are properly presented to the AG before being filed.

The judge said the Mayor's Office's motion was timely made because it was made in time to be heard far before trial, and was heard at the same time as the Commonwealth's motion to dismiss, so there was no resultant delay to the proceedings in this case.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos last week signed into law a revenue-generating bill requiring companies to pay for business license fees for each new location they open.

House Bill 18-57, HD1 is now Public Law 18-57 and it amended 4 CMC section 5611 to read, "A business shall be required to purchase one general business license for each line of business for each location in the Commonwealth."

The impetus for amending the law on business license fees came about after the Legislature found out that many businesses in the CNMI have been opening shops in different locations on the islands, while only paying for one business license for multiple locations.

"The Legislature further finds that the Commonwealth can collect additional resources by charging businesses for all locations in which the same line of business are taking advantage of this incentive and over the years have made maximum profits with this loophole in the Commonwealth's current statutes," the law reads.

HB 18-57, HD1 passed the House of Representatives last Oct. 10 and was subsequently passed by the Senate last Oct. 16. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Ford expands drivers air bag recall nationwide

DETROIT (AP)—Ford Motor Co. has agreed to government demands to expand a driver's side air bag inflator recall to the entire U.S.

The move announced Thursday adds 447,000 Ford vehicles to the list of those recalled due to driver's inflators made by Japan's Takata Corp. The inflators can explode with too much force, spewing shrapnel into drivers and passengers.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration made the demand of five automakers, saying the inflators are dangerous. Honda and Mazda already took their recalls national.

The Ford national recall covers certain 2005 to 2008 Mustangs and 2005 and 2006 GT sports cars. The company also announced it would recall the same cars in Canada, Mexico and a few other countries. Thursday's announcement brings to just over 502,000 the number of Ford vehicles under recall for Takata driver's side air bags.

U.S. passenger air bag recalls previously had been limited to Florida, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. But recently, under pressure from NHTSA, automakers have expanded them to include Saipan, Guam, American Samoa as well as Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

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NMC

From Page 1

portunity Credit, the Lifetime Learning Credit or the tuition and fees deduction on his or her tax return.

Chief financial officer Tracy Guerrero said in an interview last week that to her knowledge the college has never issued out these forms.

Leo Pangelinan, dean of Student Services, indicated the same when he assured the college would have the forms out next year.

Guerrero has been at the college for nearly two years but it appears the non-issuing of forms stretch back beyond that. On Friday, she said they have aimed to have the forms issued by February next year for taxes reported in 2014.

Yesterday, she told the Board of Regents that they are "getting the system configured" to print out these forms. But a question was also posed whether a student has the right to claim benefits for the year 2013, if the student insisted on it.

Guerrero indicated that this would be something that needs to be looked into, as filing for the year 2013 has closed. Board chair Frank Rabauliman declined to comment when asked why the college has not been issuing the forms in years past. He deferred to the college as he said it was an administrative matter.

A letter from their auditor, J. Scott Magliari & Company, in June this year recommended that the college should obtain tax opinion on whether or not the college was required to issue the 1098-T.

The letter was sent to the college's senior management and Board of Regents. It quoted the following IRS Regulations: "You must file Form 1098-T if you are an eligible education institution. An eligible education institution that is a government unit, or agency or instrumentality of a governmental unit, is subject to the reporting requirements of Form 1098-T."

The auditor said IRS further defines an "eligible education institution" as a college, university, vocational school, or postsecondary school that is described in section 481 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as in effect on August 1997.

The auditor also said that an institution is defined so if it is eligible to participate in the Department of Education's student aid programs. Over 90 percent of NMC students are awarded USDOE'S Federal Student Aid, according to Pangelinan yesterday.

The auditor also said the eligible includes "most accredited public, nonprofit, and private postsecondary institutions."

For interested students, IRS links a USDOE accreditation engine on their website. They explained that if a college was found using this accreditation search engine, then that college is eligible and "you can claim the American opportunity tax credit."

NMC appeared on the engine, as having received institutional accreditation on Jan. 1, 1985, by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

Noncompliant

A certified public accountant on island believes that NMC is indeed an eligible educational institution and the non-issuing of these forms warrant a noncompliant issue.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, he said he learned of the matter through his clients who were either students or parents of students who are enrolled at the college.

There are three kinds of benefits you can get from tuition payments you are paying to an eligible educational institution, he said.

One is tuition and fee deduction, which is deducted against the gross income of a taxpayer; the second one is a Life Time Learning credit, the maximum amount of which is $2,000 in tax credit; and the last one is the American Opportunity credit, which can give a tax credit of $1,500 and a $1,000 refundable, he said.

The American opportunity tax credit can be claimed in tax-years 2009 through 2017 for expenses paid for tuition, certain fees and course materials for higher education.

More benefits and criteria can be gathered by students or parents on the IRS website.

"NMC is not issuing a 1098-T," he said. "There are some instances where they are issuing tuition statement or statement of account, [and] some of them are using it as a basis of those credits I mentioned, but they are not actually issuing the form 1098-T."

Pangelinan confirmed that in the past NMC has received inquiries into the tax form, and the college has issued out financial statements in response.

But to his knowledge NMC has never received a complaint about the financial statement not working with CNMI Revenue and Taxation.

The accountant claimed that the "problem" is that Revenue and Taxation is honoring some of those statements. *Saipan Tribune* called but could not verify this as of press time.

Tax could also not verify whether these forms have been received by NMC, or comment further as queries bordered on confidential information and required a special request in written form.

"It's like a W2," the accountant said. "The W2 is provided to the employee by the company, one of the companies is provided to CNMI Rev' and Tax. So it shows that if Rev and Tax has a copy of the W2—and the taxpayer claims his salary and wages and withholding facts—they will always reconcile because Rev and Tax has a copy."

"But in case of the 1098s, CNMI Rev' and Tax has no idea, because a copy has not been issued."

He said a tax preparer is "blind" because the tax form indicates whether a student is eligible. For example, the form will show if the student is a graduate student and therefore not eligible for the tax credits, he said.

But this same student may avail of a tuition and fees deduction, according to him.

He also said a student must be a halftime student.

"How will I know if the student is halftime student? If the student provides a statement of account, as tax preparer there is no way you can determine that the tax you are preparing is qualified for those credits because you don't know…the school will determine that," he said.

"The parent can tell you, but what is your basis? The school is the only one that can determine that."

He believes parents and students are losing out on a lot of money in recouping tuition expenses because of the "many, many years" the forms have not been issued.

"It's a compliance issue. If NMC is an eligible educational institution then they are required to issue it. It's like a W2 that you are required to issue to employees. If you don't issue it, then you are not complying," he said.

He said it is not the obligation of CNMI Rev and Tax to inform NMC to issue a 1098-T. He said it is the responsibility of NMC to determine whether they are an eligible education institution.

MAILMAN

From Page 1

He, however, stated that Vitug worked for their law office for nearly nine years.

"She was a very highly skilled paralegal, a warm and wonderful young woman, and a devoted mother. We miss her terribly," said Mailman.

Vitug, 30, and Santos, 24, have one child together. Vitug has three other children.

The shooting happened Friday morning inside the law office of Mailman and his wife, attorney Maya Kara. Kara was also inside the office in Garapan when the tragic incident happened.

Sources also disclosed that aside from Mailman and Kara, Santos' mother was also inside the law office along with two other persons.

Police received information that Santos and Vitug broke up two months ago. Apparently, Santos tried to get her back but she refused.

Police said that, according to witness accounts, Santos and Vitug were arguing when the on-duty officer fired his DPS-issued firearm at her before shooting himself in the head.

Both Santos and Vitug were rushed to the Commonwealth Health Center, where they succumbed to their injuries, police said.

KILILI

From Page 1

day grace period for timely filed CW1 renewals is in the final stages of being approved.

"USCIS said that staff is in the process of writing the final rule to provide authorization for continued employment of CW workers for whom an extension petition is timely filed," he said.

Sablan, who was re-elected to a fourth term in Congress last Nov. 4, said, though, that USCIS is unable to provide a specific or anticipated date when the final rule will be out.

"The review and clearance process involves multiple agencies. USCIS assures me that I will be notified once the process is completed. And I have instructed my staff to follow up with the agency on a regular basis as congressional interest helps ensure the process moves forward as quickly as possible," he said.

USCIS spokesperson Marie Thérèse Sebrechts confirmed this.

"The final rule has not yet been finalized. We'll announce when it is," she said.

She also stressed that workers in possession of CW1 visas expiring on Dec. 31, 2014, must cease working after that date. "You must have approval to work," she told *Saipan Tribune* in an email.

During last Thursday's Society for Human Resource Management CNMI Chapter's 2014 Annual Conference, USCIS officer Diane Zedde alluded to the 240-day grace period for CW1 renewals but at that time said there was no development yet.

"As of yesterday afternoon [Dec. 17] when I was updating my information there's still no information whether it's gone into effect yet. That's all I know. I have no specific information," she told everyone in attendance at the event during the question-and-answer segment.

Chamber of Commerce president Alex Sablan, for his part, said the islands' biggest business organization hopes that USCIS approve 240-day grace period proposal sooner than later.

"Hopefully it gets approved like all major decisions for the CNMI were made in the 11th hour. Thankfully they've been approved but it's still an excruciating wait to say the least," he said.

The major decisions Sablan was referring to is President Barrack Obama's signing of H.R. 83, which extended the islands' E-2C program, a bar on applications for asylum in the Northern Mariana Islands, and the exemption for Guam and the Northern Marianas from the national numerical cap on H visa.

Sablan also acknowledged the effort being done by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan in having the 240-day grace period approved.

"We know Kilili's office is working hard on this issue. We're hopeful that the decision is made before the end of the year so employees who have to stop working can get back to work. We want to get this decision done so people can get back to work and we'll have are economy flowing again."

JAPAN

From Page 1

Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio said that tourism stakeholders are keenly aware of the drop and are all working to rebuild the market.

Historically, Japan was the first market that the CNMI relied on for its tourism industry. In the last few months, though, South Korea and China have taken over as the top source markets for the CNMI.

Although total arrivals have increased 16 percent, according to MVA's latest release for monthly arrivals, Japan fell by 15 percent to just 7,023 visitors last month.

According to MVA data, arrivals from Japan in 2011 comprised 44 percent of the CNMI's total arrival numbers. In 2012, this went down to 38.6 percent. It then declined further in 2013 to 34.2 percent and drastically dropped to 25.8 percent in 2014.

Despite these historic drops in the Japanese market, Tenorio assured that "CNMI will not lose the Japan market."

"It continues to remain a very important source country. There is an immediate need, however, to rebuild the Japan market so as to boost up arrivals," Tenorio said.

He said they did have a major meeting here on Saipan on Dec. 4 between key Japan travel agents and the CNMI's tourism players as well as officials of the administration to discuss how to boost Japanese arrivals.

Tenorio said they have three of these kinds of meetings a year to develop new strategies and approaches.

Factors affecting Japan market

According to Tenorio, many factors contribute to the decline in Japanese arrivals. One such factor is the increase in Japan's consumption tax from 5 percent to 8 percent in April 2014, resulting in Japanese consumers being more cautious about spending for overseas travel.

A second factor is the quick depreciation of the Japanese yen from 78 to 118 yen to the dollar today, which makes travel to dollar-based destination like the CNMI 51 percent more expensive than it used to be just a few years ago.

Another factor is that Japan has seen the launch of low-cost carriers over the last few years that are offering incredibly cheap flights to destinations like Malaysia or Bali for under $100 or even under $50 one-way.

"These predatory pricing are pulling Japanese visitors away from the CNMI than it used to be just a few years ago," Tenorio said.

These factors, coupled with a weak Japanese economy, means the Japanese are spending much less or are being very economical on travel than before. Additionally, research from April this year has shown that 70.1 percent of Japanese are reducing their spending on overseas travel, according to Tenorio.

Another reason is the drop in airlift.

"While the CNMI is enjoying additional lift from Korea and China over the past several years, there has been no new airlift from Japan. As compared to service that we used to have from Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, we now only have Delta service from Tokyo on a regularly scheduled basis and seasonal charters from secondary cities during peak season," he said.

He said another factor is the travel agents' inability to secure hotel accommodations on the island.

"This is especially difficult during the peak seasons, given the rapid increase in arrivals from Korea and China," he said.

What is the next step?

According to Tenorio, stakeholders are well aware of the drop in Japanese arrivals and are working to rebuild the market.

He noted five ways to rebuild the market again. They are:

- Targeting new low cost airlines to launch service from Japan to the CNMI.
- Re-branding the CNMI in Japan as the "Flower Islands" and "Sports Islands."
- Launching promotions including TV commercials to promote this new branding in Japan.
- Working to develop more local events like another Night Market or the Flower Island developments, which will appeal to the Japan market, as well as other markets; and
- Launch new training/educational programs for Japanese travel agents to emphasize the new hotel developments coming into the pipeline.

Impact

Japan, Korea, and China account for over 90 percent of total arrivals to the islands and estimates to have generated approximately $970 million in economic activity for the CNMI in fiscal year 2014.

According to Tenorio, a tourist from Japan who travels to the CNMI generates a total impact of $2,565 per person. An example would be last month's arrival, where the total impact from the Japan market is estimated at $18 million.

"Despite the aforementioned challenges, the MVA in collaboration with its Japan partners are actively looking at ways to boost Japan arrivals," Tenorio said.

CUC eyes returning LEAC over-collection to public

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board on Thursday talked about bringing up with the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission the LEAC reconciliation or true-up, to adjust any over- or under-collection of fuel costs from prior LEAC periods.

The CUC board wants any over-collection to be distributed back to the public as billing credits.

"Now that the oil is low and we're paying it at a low cost and we're still collecting a little bit more from our customers, there is a month of money that we collected and now we've got to return this money. That is the true-up," CUC board chair David Sablan Jr. said during the board meeting.

"So what I mean is that we're actually paying back the consumers for the fuel oil even though we're still paying the oil company because we have a surplus collection. Rather than go too deep on the balances, we can do an immediate credit to all accounts including to those that are paying," Sablan said.

He told board members and CUC executives, however, that instead of giving it back to the government, the government will be credited so it can reduce its past arrears. For residential customers, they will get their money back from CUC over the course of time.

"This is what we're discussing about," he said.

Fletcher said that CUC was due for a LEAC true-up anyway.

He noted during the board meeting that they will file a LEAC reconciliation for the CPUC and CPUC will make the decision upon the CUC board's recommendation.

Store worker stops man from allegedly stealing beer

A female employee of a store in Garapan was taken to the hospital for chest pains after a man allegedly pushed her for trying to stop him from stealing 12 cans of beer that he placed in the bottom compartment of a baby stroller Saturday afternoon.

The woman was complaining of chest pain and breathing difficulty when police officers arrived at the scene. An ambulance transported her to the Commonwealth Healthcare Center.

Ryan D. Cavalear, 31, was arrested for assault and battery, theft, and disturbing the peace.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed a $175 cash bail.

Police detective Therese S. Kintoki stated in her report that two police officers responded to the New Chang Ming Market after the Department of Public Safety received a disturbance call on Saturday afternoon.

One officer reviewed the footage on the store's surveillance camera, which showed a man identified as Cavalear pushing a baby stroller with a toddler inside.

Cavalear proceeded to the store's beverage section, took 12 cans of beer and put them in the bottom compartment of the stroller.

Cavalear allegedly walked to the store's door and tried to leave without paying for the beer. An employee, however, followed and grabbed the stroller to prevent him from leaving.

As they were each tugging on the stroller, the employee took out the beer and put them on the floor. Cavalear allegedly pushed her on the chest, carried his baby and went back into the store.

The employee told police that she noticed Cavalear enter the store thrice. She saw him taking a pair of Chopper zorries and leaving the store without paying for it. When Cavalear took the beers, the employee followed him.

Police officers responded and arrested Cavalear. The baby was released to her mother. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Criminal case is dismissed

For the government's failure to file a charging document by the deadline, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho dismissed yesterday the criminal charges against a man who allegedly received a stolen 30-inch flat screen TV.

At a supposed preliminary hearing, Camacho dismissed without prejudice the case against 28-year-old Shane Joseph Aldan and ordered his release from the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Dismissed without prejudice means the Office of the Attorney General can re-file the case in the future.

» OAG fails to file charging document

Camacho dismissed the case because the OAG failed to follow the rules that require the government to file the charging information within 10 days.

Present in court were Aldan and his counsel, assistant public defender Michael Sato. Assistant attorney general Clayton Graef appeared for the government.

Department of Public Safety police officers were also in court and ready to testify.

Police recently arrested Aldan for conspiracy and theft, and Michael Jesse Aguon Manalo, 21, for theft.

Aldan failed to post a $10,000 cash bail so his preliminary hearing was supposedly set yesterday.

Police detective Catherine B. Pangelinan stated in her report that it was Manalo's mother herself who called police last Dec. 1 to disclose that her son stole his grandmother's TV.

Pangelinan said Manalo admitted that he took the TV from the room that belongs to his grandmother and gave it to Aldan in exchange for methamphetamine or "ice."

The grandmother has been renting the TV from Dial Rent-To-Own. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Vitug rosary on Dec. 24

The rosary for Joana Katrina S. Vitug on Dec. 24 will be at pm at the San Jose Church. ***(PR)***

'Glow Walk, Run or Wheel' on Dec. 26

The Voices of the CNMI - Tinian Chapter and Team Koka culminates the year with a "Glow Walk, Run or Wheel" on Dec. 26, 2014, at the Natibu Park at 5:30pm. Shirts, bags and glow gear will be given to the first 75 people that register. Registration is $10. Proceeds will used for camps, awareness and training of self-advocates.

The Voices of the CNMI wishes to thank the Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofschneider, Office Of The Mayor, Senator Francisco M. Borja and Tinian Delegation, Tinian Municipal Council, Division of Youth Services, Elaine C. Jones, Marianas Visitors Bureau and all individuals who have one way or another helped towards making a change in the lives of individuals with disabilities. ***(PR)***

Landfill, transfer station schedule

On Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2014, the Lower Base Transfer Station and the Marpi Landfill will be closed at 12:30pm. Also, in observance of Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25, 2014, both the Lower Base Transfer Station and the Marpi Landfill will be closed all day. Regular schedule will resume Friday, Dec. 26, and Saturday, Dec. 27, 2014, from 7:30am to 11:30am and 12:30pm to 4pm. Thank you and have a safe and happy Christmas Day. From the staff and management of the Solid Waste Division. ***(PR)***

Navy training on Farallon de Mendinilla

ASAN, Guam--The U.S. Navy will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Mendinilla Dec. 23 from 4:30pm to 9:30pm. The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear from the area during the date and time indicated. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Mendinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(PR)***

Christmas parade draws spectators to PDM

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Thousands joined in once again as they did last Saturday for the weekly Christmas in the Marianas celebration, this time standing along Beach Road from Garapan Fishing Base to Paseo de Marianas waving to parade goers.

The Christmas parade kicked off a quarter to 6pm with schools and floats heading down toward Garapan's tourist district.

Among the parade participants were Koblerville Elementary School, Kagman Elementary School, Northern Marianas International School, Tanapag Junior High, San Antonio Junior High, Chacha Oceanview Junior High, Saipan Southern High School, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Miss Marianas Teen Gianna Camacho, and the Saipan Mayor's Office.

Parade participants whistled and shouted out "Merry Christmas" to spectators.

After the parade, the floats were then parked at Coral Tree Avenue for picture taking.

Students taking part in the costume competition went on stage to show off their outfits, many of which used recycled materials and home products.

Pacific Development Inc. director Gordon Marciano said the costumes were very creative.

"We have really talented students and very creative ones too. I myself would have never thought of these ideas," Marciano said.

Students showcased Christmas costumes that showed a snowman, Santa Claus, candy canes, decorated ornaments, and many more.

Healthy walking

About 35 walkers joined the 5-kilometer walk this year that started as early as 4:30pm. Those who registered got a free shirt and water. Participants walked from Paseo de Marianas toward Beach Road across Saipan Computer Services and back to Garapan Fishing Base to join the parade.

JAYSON CAMACHO
Children show off their costumes at the Christmas in the Marianas parade last Saturday.

NMC's NRM-ENRO visits RHI on Rota

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Northern Marianas College's Natural Resources Manage Department-Environmental and Natural Resources Organization, or NMR-ENRO, visited the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior and Senior High School yesterday to recruit students to enroll in their degree program and take part in the college-based group's environmental projects.

The national award-winning environmental group, through school visits and activities, continues its efforts in promoting sustainable tourism.

According to NMC professor Dr. Alfredo Torres, officers and students have been visiting schools around the CNMI as a part its efforts to recruit students to major in environmental and natural resource sciences.

The group's last visit to the southern island was two year's ago.

One Rota student who expressed interest in the program said, "I am happy that they came over to talk about the opportunity dealing with the environment."

Torres said the goal of the recruitment is not solely to increase student numbers but to expand research and educational outreach.

The student officers explained the internships, lab experiments, and benefits of the program to the Rota youth.

NRM public relations officer Julius Reyes said the group is looking for students who share a passion for the environment.

"If they feel like they want to make a difference then they should enroll. This provides a lot of real life experiences and quality education," he added.

Currently, the program is expected to graduate 26 students next year and has close to 100 students studying Natural Resource Management since its formation in 2010.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II
Dr. Alfredo Torres gestures as he explains the environmental group's educational efforts.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM OF ROTA'S FIRST CNMI TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Tamangided: Listen to your students

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Papers rustle as an occasional breeze blows into the classroom of Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr. and Sr. High School 's middle school second period English class.

Even with the air-conditioner turned off to conserve energy and students sweating buckets in the heat, English teacher Marvin Tamangided creates a comfortable classroom environment and fosters a love for literature in his students.

With five years of teaching on the southern island under his belt, Tamangided said he is honored to be the first from Rota named as the CNMI Public School System's Teacher of the Year.

"The award is really dedicated to all the students and all the teachers that I have worked with from all three islands," he added. "My best practices are the ones I have learned from other teachers."

Ever since he was a student, Tamangided has always wanted to be like some of the influential teachers he's had.

"I knew I wanted to come back to the CNMI and serve here, and Rota was where my path brought me," he added.

Tamangided was raised on Saipan. After graduating from Marianas High School, he moved to the University of Guam and earned a degree in political science. It was at the university where Tamangided was approached by former Rota principal Maria Quitugua and was offered a teaching position.

The first class he taught at the local high school was business math. He is currently a middle school English teacher.

"It has been a lot of hard work over the past years," he told *Saipan Tribune*. "One thing that is great about our system is that we have many opportunities to be a part of professional development. I take part in many of the ones I hear about. It takes a lot of time on weekends and after school, but it has been worth it."

The Rota teacher has participated in a variety of workshops, including the English Language Learning Core, New and Inspiring Leaders Core, and writing workshops.

Tamangided also strives to mold his students into lifelong learners and noted that even with the lack of resources and technology on the island, strong teachers can make up for it with creativity.

Tamangided hopes for more reduction in class sizes and for increased recruiting and retention of teachers.

"It is hard to have the highly qualified teachers stay because the cost of living is so expensive here. We need to find a way where we could support these new teachers."

When asked what his secret to success in the classroom is, he said that listening to what students have to say is a salient factor.

"Listen to what interests them. Whenever I teach a unit or lessons I see what their trends and likes are and try my best to incorporate it in my lessons," he added. "Peer learning is also important as well. Students need to learn from each other."

One 8th grade student said that Tamangided is the reason he comes to school.

"He makes us feel important and also makes us read a lot. He engages me and makes me want to learn more," the student said.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II
Marvin Tamangided leads his middle school English class in reading a novel.

KHS and SHHS sell unique products at Street Market

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Junior Achievement Clubs of Kagman High School and Saipan Southern Highs School showcased their hot-selling items at the Street Market last Thursday. Both KHS' fabric fresheners and SSHS' phone charms sold out that night, according to both clubs.

"First your charm it, cap it, and love it," Yvonne Indalecio, president of the SSHS JA Club said, when asked to describe how to place the charms on your phone.

The baubles come in different symbols, each with their own special meaning. One bauble was shaped as a pink ribbon to support breast cancer awareness; another one was teal, in support of the fight against sexual and substance abuse and ovarian cancer.

SSHS JA Club's company is called "Pacific Bauble." They sold charms at $2.99 per piece.

"A lot of meaning, a lot of messages, a lot of accessorizing" come with what they offer, Indalecio said.

Their booth was decorated with Christmas lights, balloons, and their "Pacific Bauble" logo that night. Indalecio appeared excited and confident about their club's chances in the competition. She said the "fire was on."

"We are attracting customers like flies," she told Saipan Tribune. They sold all their 272 charms, according adviser Jonathan Aguon.

The money will go to the stock capital of the JA club, Indalecio said, so they could have more money to buy marketing supplies and improve their company.

There were also rubber charms as well in the shape of butterflies, hearts, American flags, suns. They also had silver charms in the shape of starfish, dolphins, feathers, and bicycles.

Aguon said his students spent weeks to discuss, formulate, and get their business up and running. "They came up with a product. They manufactured it, and even created a commercial to promote it," he said.

"We've had different selling events to promote the company and to promote the products, and it all culminates tonight with the final selling event."

"We are very proud because their hard work really shows," he added.

Allison Arellano, vice president of the Kagman JA club, described their product as an "anti-bacterial air fabric freshener." Its purpose, she said, is to take away the "moldy smell" of household items.

"It has certain components, like geranium, lemongrass, and rosemary, and we are selling it for $10 [a bottle]," she said.

People should buy it because it's Christmas and it comes in Christmas coding, purple and gold, she added

"We are officially sold out. We made a great profit," she said. They brought 25 bottles to the market.

The students made the products themselves, combining and measuring the ingredients, and ordering the bottles online.

"This island has a need. It's so common for houses to have molds, so we tried to find a solution," said club president Jason Salgado.

PSS ceases investigation of vice principal

The Public School System has ceased its investigation of Saipan Southern High School vice principal Eric San Nicolas for having inappropriate relationships with students during his time as teacher and principal at Tinian Jr. Sr. High School.

PSS said they "did not find evidence to support a finding that [San Nicolas] had inappropriate relationships with students" of the high school. San Nicolas voluntarily resigned from his post as vice principal this month, according to PSS.

"PSS has stopped its inquiry and process. PSS takes all allegations of misconduct by its employees seriously and will continue to put the welfare of its students first," it said in a statement. PSS would not comment further.

San Nicolas was sent on administrative leave with pay on Sept. 29. A hearing officer was named for the case, but no public hearing was reportedly announced. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp
Tels: (670) 234-6866 • 234-9447 • 234-7689 • 234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
NMHC RFP 2014-006
(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)

To Conduct and Prepare the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The Corporate Director of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("NMHC"), a subsidiary public corporation of the Commonwealth Development Authority ("CDA"), a public corporation of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands, is soliciting sealed proposals in conducting and preparing the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

Proposal packets will be available on Monday, December 22, 2014, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI Holidays.

A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference is scheduled on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation's Office Conference Room. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or fax to (670) 234-9021, no later than Tuesday, January 20, 2015, 4:30 p.m., local time.

One (1) original and three (3) copies of the proposal shall be submitted in a sealed enveloped marked/stamped "Confidential" and labeled "NMHC RFP 2014-006", to the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 23, 2015.

The guidelines and specifications for this proposal may be picked up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950 during normal working hours from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI Holidays. Inquiries may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planning Assistant, at telephone numbers (670) 234-6866 or fax (670) 234-9021.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its respective program Administrative Fees for the Section 8 Multifamily, Housing Choice Voucher, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) provided to NMHC, which functions as the Public Housing Authority (PHA) for the Commonwealth.

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any defects in the said proposals, if in the sole opinion of NMHC, to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation

/s/Herman S. Sablan
Director
Procurement and Supply

ALTER CITY GROUP

***ALTER CITY GROUP** is a renowned and successful international real estate and property development and investment company with offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Zhuhai and Headquarters located in Macau. Current key projects include developing, constructing and operating 2 five-star first class integrated hotels and casinos resort, an 18-hole international golf course, a water themed park, VIP villas and other associated facilities complex located at San Jose, Tinian in CNMI.*

Our recent expansion in CNMI has created exciting opportunities and we now invite competent candidates to join us for a challenging career in our growing team within our organization.

OPERATIONS MANAGER
- The role is fundamental to the smooth and businesslike running of the corporate business on a day to day basis
- Responsible for the purchase of materials, plan inventory and ensure operations efficiency
- Responsible and lead for a wide ranging brief – facilities management, people management and finance
- Contribute towards the achievement of company's strategic and operational objectives
- Managing all security and other systems ensuring all procedures are complied with, and appropriate risks are assessed
- Conducting and implementing OM & workflow
- To ensure that the business achieves the required licenses and safety standards to comply with national health, fire and safety regulations thus ensuring the safety of the corporate staff and the public
- Perform quality controls and implement/monitor production KPI's, including setting operational goals to meet
- Manage and implement any software necessary for business growth

OPERATIONS ASSISTANT
- Assist in resolving problems on day to day basis in all operational areas
- Ensure that operational activities are executed within allotted budget, timelines and corporate policy
- Responsible for the execution of the regulations development, procedures and operating instructions tailored to the specific need of the business and addresses such functions as logistics and facilities management, range operations, and administrative requirements, etc.
- Responsible for the management of the supply chain, order processing including thorough documentation
- Maintain database of both internal and external needs
- Prepare responses to correspondence containing routine enquiries
- Other duties as assigned

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
- Develop HR strategy to short and long-range policy and operational issues
- Provides effective human resources guidance and support to the business in staffing, compensation & benefit, performance management, employee relations, orientation, policy/procedure interpretation, organizational design and recognition, etc.
- Manage the development and implementation of staffing strategies to ensure effective recruitment, using practices consistent with company policies and legal requirements
- Act as office manager to oversee and direct administrative service in the organization to ensure facility is equipped with supplies
- Create and operate a reporting system that allows for timely flow of data between regions of the organization
- Budgetary responsibilities include ensuring purchases are within assigned budget
- Performs other duties as assigned

HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANT
- Provide full support to HR Manager by assisting in managing day to day office admin and HR activities
- Assist in managing policies, procedures and conduct internal employee programs
- Maintain and update employee profiles and job specification for each hiring positions
- Hands on in HR Database Management, Legal Compliance/Code of Conduct, Organization Development/Process Improvement, Performance & Career Management, Recruitment & Selection, etc
- Arrange official appointments and meetings, record minutes and distribute
- Manage the office administration system to ensure overall company efficiency, productivity and cost effectiveness
- Any other HR duties as assigned

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING MANAGER
- Plan, execute, and finalize assigned project according to strict deadlines and within budget. Including acquiring resources and coordinating the efforts of team members and third-party contractors or consultants in order to deliver according to plan
- Setting up accounting system for new hotels and provide directions and support to all hotels in the group
- Responsible for full set of accounting including tax returns and independently oversee the financial daily operation
- Administer and monitor the financial system in order to ensure that the municipal finances are maintained in an accurate and timely manner
- Oversee the accounts payable and accounts receivable systems in order to ensure complete and accurate records of all monies
- Prepare monthly statements and financial reports
- Responsible for forecasting and budgeting
- Maintain fixed asset and depreciation registers on a monthly/quarterly basis
- CPA qualification and 8 years minimum related working experience

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT
- Managing bank accounts
- Consolidating annual accounting statements
- Preparing tax returns
- Assisting in any form of auditing
- Reconciling balance sheets
- Preparing financial reports
- Assist in other financial reporting functions when needs arise
- Perform other ad hoc tasks

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER
- Manage public relations department by planning, directing, or coordinating activities designed to create or maintain a favorable public image or raise issue awareness for the company
- Maintain effective working relationships with local and municipal government officials and media representatives
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients, government officials, and media representatives and use these relationships to develop new business opportunities
- Write effective press releases, prepare information for media kits and develop and maintain company internet or intranet web pages
- Identify main client groups and audiences, determine the best way to communicate publicity information to them, and develop and implement a communication plan
- Draft speeches for company executives, and arrange interviews and other forms of contact
- Evaluate advertising and promotion programs for compatibility with public relations efforts
- Assign, supervise and review the activities of public relations staff

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR
- Engage in promoting or creating an intended public image for the company
- Respond to requests for information from the media
- Write press releases or other media communications for promotion
- Establish or maintain cooperative relationships with representatives of community, consumer, employee, or public interest groups
- Prepare or edit organizational publications, such as employee newsletters or stockholders' reports, for internal or external audiences
- Arrange public appearances, lectures, contests, or exhibits for clients to increase product or service awareness or to promote goodwill
- Perform all other tasks as assigned by management
- Field media inquiries and present proposed responses for management

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGER
- Correspond with employees and external stakeholders to keep them informed of company developments
- Communicate externally with the media and other interested parties to announce corporate news and discuss organizational changes in a way that attempts to maintain a positive image of the company
- Identify key media opportunities, plan public relations programs, including the preparation of cost budgets
- Present controversy discussions/debates on behalf of the organization to government
- Respond to enquiries from the public, media and other organizations
- Arrange interviews with journalists, prepare and distribute media releases, and liaise with and make statements to the media/public
- Manage the creation and development of print and online advertising, email marketing, web site management and content development, press releases, bylined articles, white papers, corporate videos and any marketing collateral

CLIENT RELATIONSHIP EXECUTIVE
- Assist in developing and execute communications strategy
- Assist in building and maintaining a culture of communications within the business unit and other/external business units
- Assist in implementation of communications projects from conception to completion
- Coordinate with media and event management, provide communication services for external business units
- Track media coverage and provide analysis to the management
- Assist to conduct media materials, reports and proposals in limited time frames

Salary is commensurate with working experience and education. Qualified applicants please e-mail resumes to hr.cnmi@altercitygroup.com

- Alter City Group is an Equal Opportunity Employer
- Alter City Group offers an excellent remuneration and benefits package
- Candidates with local language ability would be an advantage and able to speak Chinese, Japanese or Korean would be a bonus
- For manager position, university/college graduate with minimum 8 years of related working experience and for executive assistant position, degree holder with minimum 5 years
- Excellent in oral and written communications
- Willing to work flexible hours
- Individual must be authorized to work in the U.S. and its territories

Thank you, Si Yu'os Ma'ase and Olomwaay for your interest in working with Alter City Group.

Plumeria Golf & Casino Resort
Tinian, CNMI

USDA extends agriculture microloan program in Marshalls

MAJURO, Marshall Islands--The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Friday entered into an agreement with the Republic of Marshall Islands to extend the popular USDA microloan program to farmers and ranchers of this island nation.

"Access to low-interest microloans will offer producers of Majuro new opportunities to grow their businesses to meet their family's financial needs, increase local food self-sufficiency and support the expansion of the local economy," said USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Diane Ley.

The microloan program was established last year by the USDA Farm Service Agency to provide beginning, small, or traditionally underserved family farming operations with access to up to $50,000 in loans using a simplified application process, with up to seven years to repay. The loans are designed to bolster the progress of producers in their initial operational years by providing early financial resources to increase equity and assist with graduating to commercial credit and expanding operations. Microloans can be used for initial start-up expenses; annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities and land rents; marketing and distribution expenses; or purchase of livestock and equipment.

An important component of Friday's agreement is partnerships with local businesses and organizations that will serve as a direct link between Marshallese farmers and the USDA Farm Service Agency. Partners include the U.S. Small Business Development Center, a non-profit organization that will guide producers in the loan application process. Other partners include the College of the Marshall Islands, which will provide training and educational workshops to producers, and the Marshall Islands Ministry of Resources and Development, which will coordinate the partners and offer technical support to Majuro producers.

The initiative meets the objectives defined in the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to increase access to federal programs that improve health, and environmental quality, and access to fresh produce, meats and agricultural production practices.

A former Trust Territory of the Pacific, the Republic of Marshall Islands became an independent nation in the 1980s, with the United States government providing certain federal programs under the treaty terms of the Compact of Free Association, as amended. In 2007, Farm Service Agency updated its regulatory definition of "United States" to include the Republic of Marshall Islands and other former Trust Territories of the Pacific.

Since 2010, USDA has made a record amount of farm loans—more than 165,000 loans totaling nearly $23 billion. More than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers. In addition, USDA has increased its lending to socially-disadvantaged producers by nearly 50 percent since 2010. For more information on USDA microloans, contact www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans. To learn more about how USDA is helping beginning farmers, visit www.usda.gov/newfarmer.

These programs were made possible by the 2014 Farm Bill, which builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill. ***(PR)***

Great performance of GMS students at forensic competitions

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Winning students from Green Meadow School in the recent PGFC, NJSDA and Math Court competitions are joined in the picture by their school president, teachers and coaches.

Competing students from Green Meadow School once again made the whole GMS family proud with their outstanding performances at the recent PGFC, NJSDA and Math Court competitions. In the K-2 Division, GMS Kindergarten pupils performed exceptionally well by bagging first honor in Choral Speaking, Duo Interpretation and Readers Forum. Kinder 5 and 1st Grade students also placed second in Dramatic Interpretation, Readers Forum and Choral Speaking.

Congratulations also to the small group of 6th graders from Green Meadow School for an excellent performance at the NJSDA held on Nov. 22, 2014, at Mount Carmel School. The whole GMS family is also very proud of Xavier Gatmaitan, 6th grade, for placing third in the Nov. 15, 2014 Math Court competition. Though few in number, they are soaring high!

PRIMARY GRADE FORENSIC COMPETITION
Green Meadow School, Dec. 6, 2014

K-2 DIVISION

1st Place, Choral Speaking
Iyanah Ranin, K5
Jheyden Ablog, K5
Kaithlyn Drilon, K5
Jilian Jade Concepcion, K5
Vimarie Alna Alfeche, K5

1st Place, Duo Interpretation
Chedlen Rose Villavueva (K5)
Justin Mallari (K5)

1st Place, Reader's Forum
Josephine Lopez, K5

2nd Place, Dramatic Interpretation
Leonard Jake Regalado, 1st Grade

2nd Place, Reading
Carly Kate Dela Cruz, K5

2nd Place, Choral Speaking
Eric Ferrer
Leonard Jake Regalado
Philsimon Gregorio (all 1st Grade)
4th Place, Dramatic Interpretation
Tristan Yanto, K5

4th Place, Reader's Forum
Jasmyne Tolentino, 1st Grade

4th Place, Duo Interpretation
Chealzka Navarro, 2nd Grade
Carmelo Banzagale, 2nd Grade

4th Place, Choral Speaking
Bianca Nicole Mabalay
Zaira Angela Llaga
Lvinna Palma (all 1st Grade)

5th Place, Impromptu Speaking
Shalei Terrei K. Camacho, K5

5th Place, Duo Interpretation
Keith Deane Ebuen
Angel Cryzelle Manalo
(2nd Graders)

5th Place, Choral Speaking
Alexa Ralene Panganiban
Paula Angela Bernardo
Shalei Terrei K. Camacho
Josephine Lopez
Wilfredo Libante
(all K5 students)

3 - 5 DIVISION

1st Place, Choral Speaking
Raeka Shereen Lantin
Jazmyn Lopez
Leunyce Regalado
Samantha Gabrielle Flores
Angelene Faith Cacdac
(all 4th Grade)

3rd Place, Dramatic Interpretation
Areeza Anda, 3rd Grade

3rd Place, Humorous Interpretation
Keith Gester Villasin, 4th Grade

3rd Place, Readers' Forum
Rownel Jody Coloma, 5th Grade

4th Place, Readers' Forum
Angeline Norcio, 5th Grade

4th Place, DUO Interpretation
Areeza Anda, 3rd Grade
Nicole Sacramento, 3rd Grade

5th Place, DUO Interpretation
Eonzen Dela Paz
Earl Lawrence Salamant
(both 5th Grade)

NATIONAL JUNIOR SPEAKING AND DEBATE ASSOCIATION
Mount Carmel School, Nov. 22, 2014

4th Place, Poetry Masters
Mikee Mendoza, 6th Grade

5th Place, Storytelling
Xavier Gatmaitan,
6th Grade

5th Place, Dramatic Interpretation
Bernard Marcelo,
6th Grade

5th Place, DUO Interpretation
Mikee Mendoza
Gia Hemley, 6th Grade

MATH COURT
Hopwood Junior High School,
Nov. 15, 2014

3rd Place
Xavier Gatmaitan, 6th Grade

Search for missing crewmember off Palau

PALAU—The search continues for a missing crewmember from the Panama flagged cargo ship Beagel1 approximately 210 nautical miles south-southeast of Palau.

Searches have been conducted by both aircraft and vessels since the evening of Dec. 19. Search resources have included Beagel 1, U.S. Navy P-8 aircraft from Kadena Air Base in Japan, tank ship Gaslog Chelsea, and tank ship Gaslog Savannah. Both the Gaslog Chelsea and

Gaslog Savannah participate in the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System, or AMVER, a voluntary program in which merchant vessels around the world have signed-up to be called upon to provide assistance during maritime distress. ***(USCG)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SPECIAL SERENADE
On Thursday, Dec. 18, 2014, DPS and Ports Police personnel paid a visit to Moylan's Insurance Underwriters, Saipan office. The MIU staff was serenaded in the spirit of the season with a number of wonderful Christmas melodies. Some of the staff even chimed in and sang along with the group. DPS and Ports Police are going around conducting a special serenade in efforts to promote "Buzzed Driving IS Drunk Driving: Do Not Drive Drunk this Holiday Season." Their efforts were truly appreciated and enjoyed by the Moylan's Insurance staff and management.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-044

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Fiscal Technician

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or designee. May supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Receives and processes customer payments; screens and verifies check receipts; updates customer accounts; reviews customer account status for partial payment receipts; computes payment information; and issues payment slips. May provide field utility meter inspection, testing, investigation, repairs and service documentation. Enters and verifies account changes and correction transactions; researches, reconciles and compiles adjustment documentation; prepares billing adjustments; and/or documents customer account status. Balances cash and other payment receipts and prepares bank deposits; balances credit card receipts with merchant settlement records; prepares sales deposits; processes customer refund payments; may process and file payroll documents. Receives and responds to customer calls and inquiries; reviews account and payment information; explains customer billing regarding charge disputes; assists customers with new accounts, required documentation and application processing; processes work orders as required; and refers inquiries to appropriate resource. Organizes and files revenue receipts, change vouchers, and related reports; maintains filing system; and prepares listings, schedules and activity reports. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: F.A.M. /C.F.O., **Saipan**, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $20,826.00 per annum to $28,115.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): Three (3)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma and 4 years of utility accounts or fiscal support experience. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Receiving, posting and reconciling payments, cash receipts or account information; Verifying and updating account or utility meter information; Providing customer service and responding to inquiries; Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage and testing (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching, reconciling and preparing account adjustments and related documentation; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Researching account information and providing information regarding billing disputes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants will be tested and are subject to pre-employment drug testing.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-048

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Engineering Technician

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Power Division manager or designee. Provides technical support and assistance related to project management, safety, quality control and assurance; performs field investigations and inspections; performs field or easement verifications; monitors equipment and materials used; ensures adherence with plans, specifications and contractual compliance; and submits deficiencies for review and correction. Gathers data through observation and by reviewing relevant resources such as construction plans, blue prints, specifications, maps, technical drawings, property records, and/or GPS data. Enters, updates and verifies data in systems; prepares and maintains reports, notices, drawings, graphs, charts, correspondence, cost estimates and related engineering documents in accordance with standards. Plans and prioritizes schedule and routes for field inspections; researches existing project sites and explores potential construction sites; monitors rights of way and easements. Monitors and reviews equipment and supplies inventory; provides notification of resource or maintenance needs. Provides support and assistance with special engineering studies. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $20,826.00 per annum to $28,115.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma and 2 years of journey level experience in drafting, office and field engineering, or surveying support work. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Basic engineering and construction terminology, methods, practices, and techniques; Surveying methods and techniques; Mathematical concepts; Applicable equipment, controls and systems of assigned area of responsibility; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Reading and interpreting plans, specifications, maps and related technical documentation; Performing engineering surveys, mapping and locating; Performing inspections and identifying issues in assigned area of responsibility; Operating and maintaining equipment in assigned area of responsibility; Performing mathematical calculations and estimating resources and costs; Researching, troubleshooting and problem solving; Preparing technical reports, maps and related documents used in assigned area of responsibility; Applying safe work practices; Planning and prioritizing activities and routes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-045

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Fiscal Technician, Senior

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or designee. May provide lead direction and/or supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Receives, reviews and verifies vendor invoices and statements; service reports; time sheets; payroll information; and/or other payable documentation; ensures completeness and accuracy of calculations and information. Determines general ledger account information or expense allocation information; processes accounts payable or payroll transactions; routes check payment or wire transfer information for approval; posts accounts upon approval. Researches and reviews account, billing or system information; prepares reconciliations of financial data; updates and maintains account or employee data; calculates and prepares financial adjustments or account charge information. Assists internal and external customers with inquiries or account information; receives complaints; researches issues; provides information and explains processes and procedures; recommends resolutions to issues. Retrieves, files and maintains records, documents and tracking spreadsheets; processes purchase orders; prepares reports, work orders and/or audit confirmations; compiles documents and drafts correspondence. May provide testimony related to customer account disputes. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: F.A.M. /C.F.O., **Saipan**, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $22.865.00 per annum to $30,867.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Associate's Degree in Accounting or directly related field and 3 years of fiscal support experience; OR High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program, AS Diploma and 6 years of direct fiscal support experience. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Research methods; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Receiving, reviewing, posting and reconciling fiscal data or account information; Verifying fiscal data and updating account information; Responding to inquiries, researching information and resolving issues; Performing mathematical calculations and making corrections and adjustments; Researching and preparing account adjustments and related documentation; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, correspondence, reports and records; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Researching account information and providing information regarding billing disputes; Organizing and maintaining records management systems; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants will be tested and are subject to pre-employment drug testing.

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-049

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Engineer, Senior (Electrical, PE)

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Power Division manager or designee. As assigned, supervises staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Manages complex water, wastewater, or electrical projects and executing programs and elements of the stipulated order as required by EPA; coordinates and meets with other divisional sections and corporate divisions to coordinate activities and projects. Performs project management activities to include: preparing reports, correspondence and recommendations; developing scope of work; providing technical reviews; surveying for projects; scheduling project elements; evaluating proposals; monitoring project progress and funding; and, recommending project selection. Prepares engineering calculations, plans and specifications; designs water, wastewater or other utility related facilities; collects data and performs project research related to project and operational costs, and efficiency analysis. Manages construction and performs contract management work; evaluates bid documents; maintains correspondence with contractors; reviews submittals; interprets drawings and technical specifications; and evaluates work for compliance with contract provisions. Performs construction inspections; reviews and processes payment requests from contractors. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $48,821.00 per annum to $82,995.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering, 5 years professional engineering experience and at least two years' experience supervising and engineering section. Licensed in a U.S. jurisdiction as an Electrical Engineer. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Engineering and construction principles, methods, practices, and techniques; Engineering planning, specification, and drawing methods and techniques; Mathematical concepts; Applicable equipment, controls and systems of assigned area of responsibility; Safety principles and practices; Data collection techniques; Research methods; Project management principles; Contract administration principles; Customer service principles; Quality assurance principles; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Managing complex projects and construction activities; Developing project scope and plan; Monitoring project schedules, status and compliance; Preparing plan designs, calculations, technical specifications, and other technical documentation; Planning and designing utility facilities; Performing technical review of submittals; Interpreting drawings and technical specifications; Monitoring project funding and expenditures; Maintaining project files and records; Performing research and efficiency studies; Responding to technical inquiries and information requests; Identifying, troubleshooting and investigating issues; Recommending, developing and implementing solutions; Conducting inspections; Collecting, analyzing and researching field data; Administering and monitoring contract compliance; Assisting with bid administration processes; Applying safe work practices; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Proposed change in US policy toward Cuba is momentous, meaningful and right

Just a year ago, at a memorial service for Nelson Mandela in South Africa, President Barack Obama set tongues wagging by greeting Cuba's President Raul Castro with a handshake. That small gesture caused some to wonder if a little thaw might be possible in the ice-cold war that has defined U.S. relations with its island neighbor for more than a half century.

Declaring that the policies of the past—a trade embargo, thorough isolation—have not worked in those 53 years, Obama on Wednesday announced a momentous shift in attitude toward the Communist-led nation.

He intends to set in motion policies that would begin to normalize relations, establish embassies and recognize that the U.S. and Cuba have joint interests in the hemisphere and the world that would benefit both countries if allowed to speak and work together.

Coinciding with prisoner swaps, and reportedly inspired in part by whispers from Pope Francis, Obama's action is sure to face stiff opposition in Congress. But it's long overdue and will help make at least our part of the world better.

Obama, at times speaking directly to the Cuban audience as well as those in this country, called "on Cuba to unleash the potential of 11 million Cubans."

Most Cubans on the island have known little more than oppression and relative poverty under the dictatorship begun by the elder Castro brother, Fidel, after the revolution of the late 1950s.

In reacting to the news, the gnarliest of Republican opponents seem exceedingly out of touch with a majority of Americans and with reality. Despite his Cuban-American heritage, Florida's Sen. Marco Rubio could do little more than grandstand on Wednesday. He belittled the president, saying Obama was "willfully ignorant of the way the world works." To hand normalized relations to the Cubans, Rubio said, would preserve that government's iron-fisted rule for decades to come. How can Rubio's political naivete be taken seriously?

Sen. Pat Roberts of Kansas has yet to be heard from, but he should speak up and break ranks with the most vocal of his GOP brethren. In the past, Roberts has recognized the business potential for Kansas farmers in a future under which the U.S. and Cuba can get along. Kansas farmers and ranchers—and those in Missouri, as well—have a lot to teach the Cubans, whose agricultural infrastructure is woefully underdeveloped.

Obama's speech was one of his strongest of recent months, another important display in his new period of lame-duck boldness.

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Terrorists win a round over Sony's 'Interview'

If an anonymous group threatened in mid-December to harm bakeries without saying where, when or how, would every doughnut shop and cake vendor feel compelled to shut down through the holiday season? Of course not. Yet

See PROPOSED on Next Page

Refugees must be protected, even at sea

By MARK HETFIELD
Tribune News Service

Mark Hetfield is president and CEO of HIAS, the international Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees. Readers may send him mail at 333 7th Avenue, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

How can we possibly protect someone who, having lost everything else, risks his life by fleeing on an unseaworthy boat? Refugees take to rough waters because there are no alternative migration channels on land—and they prefer the risk at sea over the violence and despair they are fleeing.

I have just returned from a meeting convened by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Geneva of government officials, advocates and experts from around the world to confront one of the most "wicked problems" of the global refugee landscape—migration by sea. Faced with a staggering loss of life of migrants who escape by boat despite huge risks, one goal of the dialogue was to deter governments who "rescue" boat people by returning them to their persecutors. While harrowing accounts of perilous, overcrowded maritime escapes from the Middle East and North Africa are making headlines in Australia and Europe, they have gotten little attention in the United States. Yet we too have "boat people," mostly Haitians and Cubans.

From 2010 through the first half of 2014, 15,190 people in 440 recorded maritime incidents sought safety via boats carrying migrants in the Caribbean Sea. During this time, some 240 migrants drowned, and 176 were missing at sea. The U.S. Coast Guard picked up the rest. The victims of these incidents were men, women and child migrants from Haiti, Cuba, Dominican Republic and other countries of the Caribbean and South America.

All migrants intercepted in the Caribbean must be given meaningful access to asylum in accordance with the Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. Currently, Cubans and Chinese interdicted by the U.S. are advised of their right to apply for asylum in their own language. It is unclear whether Dominicans, South Americans and other migrants are treated the same.

What is clear is that the United States government treats Haitians differently and unfairly.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order authorizing the Attorney General to return individuals to Haiti without an obligation to screen for a fear of persecution. This order, similar to orders issues by previous Administrations, remains in effect and is in direct violation of U.S. obligations under international law.

During the last three decades, U.S. Coast Guard has returned all Haitians who do not demonstrate a "physical manifestation" of a fear or return. Those that pass this "shout test" or "sweat test" may be referred for an asylum screening.

The shout test does not pass the smell test. It is ineffective as a refugee screening tool and makes a mockery of international legal standards. No Haitian has been granted asylum after having been "screened" in this careless and arbitrary fashion. The U.S. Coast Guard has subsequently identified one Haitian as having a manifestation of fear, and that person did not pass the credible fear screening. In contrast, in 2010, 55 percent of Haitians who applied for asylum in the U.S. after arriving by air or land were granted asylum.

All U.S. Coast Guard rescue efforts should include procedures that advise migrants of their right to seek asylum if they fear return. The U.S. should not return an intercepted person until he or she has an opportunity to be individually screened, preferably on land, for a fear of persecution.

Also concerning are the bilateral agreements on interdiction in the region. For example, the U.S. engages in joint interdiction operations with the Bahamas. Pursuant to these agreements, migrants are disembarked in the Bahamas, where there is no meaningful process to identify those with a fear of return. This is unacceptable. The U.S. should review the practice of sending intercepted migrants to countries that are not known to respect their international obligations. Such obligations are enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and other international human rights instruments.

The U.S. should provide alternative channels for safe and legal migration that would reduce the need for refugees to risk their lives at sea, including development assistance in the region, humanitarian visas, and opportunities for legal migration.

The recent announcement by the U.S. government of a Haitian Family Reunification program, which permits certain Haitians to join family members in the United States, is a good step. Such legal avenues provide an alternative to migration by sea—and more importantly, to the potential loss of life. As the High Commissioner said at the Geneva dialogue, "Protection at sea starts with protection on land."

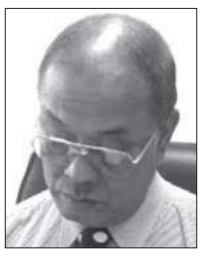
There are no easy answers to the dilemma posed by migrants who flee danger by sailing into danger. But even at sea, all individuals have the right to seek protection from persecution without having to "shout" or "sweat." Motivated by refugee protection, we hope the U.S. and other governments not only spoke during the dialogue, but also listened. That might save lives.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Gi bespiran Noche Buena

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*



Agupa` na ha`ane i bespiran Noche Buena. Baba korason miyu kumu preparasion finatton i Nanalibreta. Ta tatiye tinago`ña pot inasi`i gi prohimuta ya u ñahlalañg siñiente-ta gi ha`anen Noche Buena. Ta gagau lokue` bendision-ta ya U ayuda hit gi nuebu na sakan.

Echa lokue` kada patgon bendision ya u felis kareraña gi nuebu na sakan. Tafan adiseha de nuebu gi hilu` pas yan ginefli`e unu yan otru. Felis Noche Buena!

Probleman Hanom

Entalu` Kanat Tabla esta iya Afetñas imbeninau i hanom ni gaselinan ruplanu. Hagas gaige este na problema lau ni unu kalalamten para umake satba pot proteksion hinemlu` publiku.

I CUC yan DEQ kulan maleletke i asuntu. Mina trabiha ti a`anog problemaña este na asuntu pot bubula ha` hanom ya ginen papa` `nai machochopchup hulu`. Gigon marebaha ñaihon siempre gaselina `sino imbeninau na hanom madispacha gi tautau siha.

Gaige gi menan St. Jude na gima` Yuus un` tupu` ni mahuchum pot imbeninau i hanom. Hafa ya ha chalapongue` gi señgsoñg siha ni mantineteka? Kau ginagau dispensu nahoñg `an guaha pininu` nu este na diskuidu? Nahoñg fondun CUC yan DEQ para `an makone` para i kotte pot diskuidu gi publiku?

Mina` kulan mahasñgon maletke i asuntu pot ni unu tumuñgu` kuantu na dañu yan haye para u responsable gi areglu yan apas publiku gi este na diskuidu. Kau i CUC, DEQ, Navy pat EPA? Deste ñgai`an na tiempu `nai masoda` i gaselina? Tiempun Navy, Trust Territory pat guine ha` gi alacha? Sin hafa mas na ditension debi umasatba este na problema antes de u lachai muna` fan malañgu mas i natibu!

Modun Pinepble

I kantan Añu Nuebu ilelegña patte, "Jesus Yuus mame gi nuebu na sakan, gai ase` nu hame, apatta i dañu, na`e nu i deskansu i mangaige `sta gi naftan yan ayu siakassu matai na sakan".

Esta na` tuhu` lagu` `an sige ta kanta este gi misan gayu (Añu Nuebu). Kulan ensegidas tali`e i man-hanau `sta na man-guinaiya-ta kontodu mañaina-ta gi halom hinasso-ta. Todu modun grasia yan pinadese chinahlau lokue` ni nuebu na sakan.

"Tafan Magof Todu" i sunidu i muna`e hit kampu para ta aregla ha`anita dibuenamente. Na bonito este na ha`ane piot `an mattu i Niñu giya hamyu. Bien Añu Nuebu yan bendision para todu!

Mafañagu gi liyañg gaga`

Kuatdiba siñienteña si San Jose `nai man-dadakot gi gima` tautau siha pot esta mampos hihot para u deskatga si Santa Maria i Niñu Jesus.

Sumen maneñgheñg i pueñge, ni kandet gi señgsoñg lau sige ha` si San Jose ha usune mamaisen. Ni unu umaksepta-gue`. Ayu mina` humahnanau estake ha soda` un` liyañg ga`ga` `nai mafañagu i Niñu Jesus.

Milagrosu i pueñge `nai muma`lag iya Belen ini`ina ni manmalag pution ginen i lañget. Sige man-añghet mañganta ma-abibiba mafañagun i Rai i tanu`. I mañan tautau siha ni chumanda si San Jose inipos na bidan tailaye.

Hana` hahassu-yu` un` siniseden dos umasagua `nai mattu un` tautau mamaisen para u fan guasan ya taya` malago`ña fina` amotsan talo`ane. Gi lemlem tautau marikohe sinsiyun niha para umana`e i prohimu lau esta humanau. Sige ma`aligau gi bisinu lau ti masoda`.

Sige mona marepara na tatnai magasta pine`lun niha gi bañku. Mahusga haye pumoluluye lau ni bañku ti siña ha oppe sa` ni siha mismu ti siña ma-arastreha ginen mamanu ayu na fondu.

Mientras megai gi entre hita man-mafañagu gi modetnu na hospitat i Niñu gi liyañg gaga`. Na geftau hau na biahe piot guine gi tiempon gupot.

Apaga` pot apaga`

Tatnai in` repara na ni taimanu modun linala` tautau siempre manafagcha` hit gi mismu hospitat, sagan katga gi plasan batkon aire, komun, tenda, simienteyu yan otru siha `nai todu mangai nesessidat?

Gi sagan maleta taya` guihe galun first pat economy class. Hala maletamu ya un` ritira hau. `An mana` saga hau gi hospitat, pues parehu lugat para otru malañgu. Gi simienteyu, mas taya` raya guihe sa` siempre tafan añañgon gi ge`papa`. Piot sa` ni neñkanu ni sitbesa guaha guihe papa`.

Pa`gu yan hayumu fumababa i otru, pues nanañgga biradan i batku sa` tat kaga ti para hagu. Dios mihu ya mana` fan fila gi menamu muñga sa` nahuñg kestatmu para esta`i finataimu.

Tai bali para un` aminasa i otru pot banida yan heñiun kabron. Gi finu man-amku` tat banidosu ti tumatke fondiyosña. Pues adahe na un` linaisen pachot putarian sanhilu`.

Minaipen tautau

Sessu hu huñgog gi man-amku` masañgan pot "minaipen tautau". Tatnai hu attende `sino abirigua haf` sustansiaña. Adumididi` sige hu li`e kurentin i man-sañgan. Ya kanaha` todu birada mana` empas i tailaye na chechu` muron piot i mahasñgune.

Mas ke dies hu li`e pumadese minaipen tautau. Guaha ha` lokue` esta man-marehistra para u chule gi ti apmam patten niha. Gi uttimu besis sumen namase` este na hinanau. Dispues de mahafot i tautau suette `an guaha humassu maseha un` Tatan Mame.

I minaipen tautau kontodu dispues de seputtura un` tinatiye. Dos chatregalu para pattemu: Ginen i Saina, i otru ginen i unna` tailaye `sino fababa!

Pot chaleg: Hu soda` un` hagas fuetsudu na amiguhu. Sige hana`e animu guatu gi pettan hospitat para u ali`e yan mediku. Hu pada` na para bai`n ge`hiyoñg. Mamaisen na hafa guaha. Ileghu, para ta mumu na dos. Ai na chaleg `nai ilegña, "Esta Iku, un` a`ñauyu` diberas".

Sen malañgu magahet i amiguhu. Diberas matulaikan i tiempu deste `nai manfuetsudu hit estake kontodu pokatta suspichosu. Kulan i atdau ni doku` `an oga`an dispues machum gi pupueñge. Parehu tapbla yan finapos tautau.

■■■

Estaba un` amiguhu gi hiyoñg gima Yuus para u attende misan enteru. Ha sañgan dispues na ma`añau-gue` matai. Hu repite na tres asuntu ha` sumen seguru gi linala` tautau: Mafañagu, ma-tax dispues matai. Ni unu siña tana` para piot matai!

My parents' best gifts didn't come wrapped

By GINA BARRECA
The Hartford Courant

Gina Barreca is an English professor at the University of Connecticut, a feminist scholar who has written eight books, and a columnist for the Hartford Courant. *She can be reached through her website at http://www.ginabarreca.com.*

My parents didn't spend too much time worrying about how my brother and I would turn out as adults. If we were happy doing whatever we were doing when we were kids, that was enough for them.

We were not, in other words, taught to think only of our future achievements. There was never a "Do this now, even if it makes you unhappy, because you will be a better person for it," rationale.

My grandmother's house, where my brother and I spent our earliest youth, was anything but childproof. To be honest, it wasn't even adult proof.

There were rooms that nobody went into, because they were purely for show, roped off as if in a museum. True, the rope was invisible but it was still there. That was fine. The spaces to which I had access were all mine. My mother didn't worry about neatness, although she did worry about cleanliness, and the rooms opened to everybody were safe places for everybody to be.

I was never spanked or hit. If we did something strictly against our family's rules, we were yelled at, but not embarrassed, and rarely shamed in front of other people. We weren't told that we were bad, although it was driven home that whatever we did we shouldn't do again.

We were usually allowed to explain our side of things. I learned early on that if I could explain why I did something or why I wanted something, I had a much better chance of being successful. Language seemed to be the key. It got me attention: It permitted me to defend myself, and even to protect myself in advance.

I was put to sleep every night by playing word games with my parents. One or the other of them would tuck me in and recite a string of unrelated terms. If it was a good word, like flower, kitten or princess (it was 1958—what did you expect?) I would respond by shaking my head once. For words I didn't like—garbage, bug, subway—I'd shake my head twice.

Certain words I simply liked the sound of, and I would repeat them over and over again. I like the sound of carousel, for example, and I like the sound of windowpane. The meaning was secondary to the texture of the language.

I discovered it was better to ask what the consequences of doing something were, rather than doing it and finding out, which taught me to ask for help when I needed it.

Learning how to ask, politely and with what I now recognize as humility, was probably one of the best lessons I was ever taught: Even a kindergarten student who can let the teacher know that she doesn't understand what's expected of her before she's asked to perform a task is miles ahead of the kid who can't express her cluelessness except through failure.

Our classroom groups were mixed in terms of everyone's age and abilities—it was a new educational strategy—I so learned how to lead the little kids as well as how to be subordinate to the big kids.

You had to figure out who was appropriate to choose as actual competition. You didn't want to choose somebody to play with who couldn't keep up with you, and you didn't always want to be the sucker or the loser in the game where you couldn't keep up with everybody else.

It's not usually specific information for which a child searches, but a reward for her curiosity.

A child whose curiosity is rewarded will become enthusiastically engaged in the details of life, and will, as a result, become more interesting herself.

She'll have observations to make and questions to ask. A child who likes herself will like other people and a child who likes other people will not be easily intimidated by them.

She'll be aware of her environment—conscious of its limitation and its potential—and be allowed to grow up without the debilitating expectation of being forced to fulfill someone else's dream.

Curiosity and a sense of competence are the best gifts parents can give a child. They are invaluable and they last a lifetime.

PROPOSED

From Page 10

a threat by an anonymous group of hackers led the country's major theater chains to close their doors to "The Interview," Sony Pictures' edgy comedy about a planned assassination of North Korea's Kim Jong Un. The hackers are engaged in terrorism, pure and simple, in an effort to stop people from seeing the movie. But even though the terrorists won this round, Sony still can _ and should _ make the movie widely available through other means.

The so-called Guardians of Peace, whom U.S. intelligence officials have reportedly linked to the North Korean government, assaulted Sony's computer network in late November, stealing files and erasing hard drives. After titillating industry-watchers for a few weeks by leaking embarrassing emails and sensitive personal information about Sony employees _ as well as exposing rank-and-file studio employees to identity theft by releasing their Social Security numbers _ the hackers upped the ante this week by promising a "bitter fate" to those who see the movie. "Remember the 11th of September 2001," the group said. "We recommend you to keep yourself distant from the places (that show "The Interview") at that time."

The nation's five largest theater chains dropped the film within a day, saying they wanted to wait until federal authorities had completed their investigation or the hackers had been caught. Sony responded Wednesday by announcing that it would not release the film to theaters next week, with no hint as to its future plans.

Considering the Guardians' demonstrable ability to wreak havoc digitally and the potential _ however remote _ that someone could get hurt, theater owners are in a very tough spot. Yet if the hackers succeed in keeping "The Interview" out of theaters, it will surely not be the last time a group with an ax to grind makes such a threat. And there's no shortage of people around the world with axes to grind.

Sony can make the best of a bad situation by borrowing a tactic increasingly used by independent studios. It should make "The Interview" available through online and pay-TV video-on-demand services, which don't lend themselves to a headline-grabbing attack the way a crowded multiplex might. And if the studio really wanted to stick it to the Guardians, it would offer the movie at a price designed to maximize the number of viewers, not necessarily the revenue collected.

Judging from the early reviews, "The Interview" probably isn't worth the fuss. But the hackers picked this fight, threatening not just a single Hollywood studio but the millions of Americans likely to go to a movie during the holidays. And no matter what you think of the people behind "The Interview," they represent any artist whose work may offend someone in power. That's the sort of speech we can't afford to have squelched.

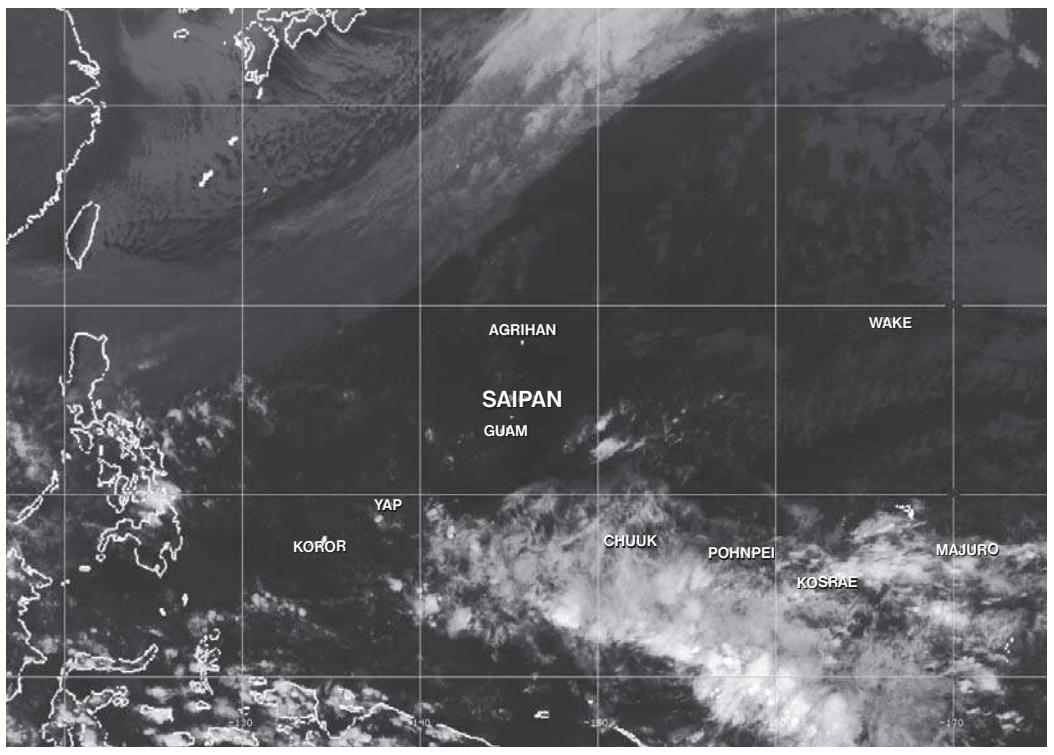
(c)2014 *Los Angeles Times*

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2014

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from east of Iwo To Island near 25N143E to beyond 130E at 17N. Extensive cloudiness and patchy showers are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough extends eastward from 3N130E through a circulation centered southeast of Yap near 3N143E then through another circulation centered southwest of Kosrae near 2N161E to end at EQ168E. Numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae within 150 miles of a line from 8N143E to EQ164E. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms across the Marshall Islands within 140 miles of a line from 7N165E to 5N175E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲85	▼81
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼79
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼78
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼81
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼81

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼62
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼24
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲67	▼59
Honolulu	Showers	▲76	▼68
London	Windy	▲56	▼51
Los Angeles	Suny	▲73	▼56
Manila	Showers	▲82	▼75
Melbourne	Showers	▲87	▼58
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲80	▼71
New York	Cloudy	▲44	▼41
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼41
Paris	Cloudy	▲51	▼46
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲50	▼39
Rome	Sunny	▲61	▼46
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲52	▼49
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲65	▼52
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲46	▼34
Tokyo	Sunny	▲50	▼36
Washington, DC	Showers	▲41	▼40

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:19 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.6 Feet
9:17 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
2:47 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
7:45 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Wednesday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Thursday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Saturday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	7:23 AM	7:10 PM
Wednesday	8:19 AM	8:11 PM
Thursday	9:13 AM	9:12 AM
Friday	10:03 AM	10:11 PM
Saturday	10:52 AM	11:09 PM

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

‘NPS designation would make Rota an int’l destination’

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

On Dec. 12, the U.S Congress authorized one of the largest expansions for the National Park System by passing H.R 3979 or the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. That bill includes public lands title that will create seven new national park sites, expand nine existing parks, and eight formal resource studies to determine whether other sites would be appropriate for future inclusion in the National Park System. It so happens that one of those eight studies is the potential Rota National Park.

“I am very happy to hear that Rota National Park feasibility study has been passed by both houses in the U.S Congress and for the U.S President to sign, it was lot of hard work that we did during the 13th and 14th Legislature,” said former senator Diego M. Songao last week at the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. board meeting.

This bill now awaits President Obama’s signature.

If signed, the Department of the Interior will do a study to determine whether Rota should be designated as part of the National Park System.

In an earlier interview with Songao, he said that he and several lawmakers tried to push for the establishment of the Rota National Park about 10 years ago.

“If Rota becomes a national park, it would be put on the map and more visitors will travel to Rota,” Songao said.

Three years, finally through...

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) introduced the Rota National Park for legislation through the U.S House of Representatives in 2010, 2012, and 2013, passing thrice in which a suitability and feasibility study would happen. It did not go further than that, with U.S Senate failing to act on the bill.

Sablan then included the study in what he describes as a “must pass” Defense bill, HR 3979, which then passed Congress.

In his newsletter, Sablan stated that having a National Park would put Rota on the map as an international destination for eco-tourists and adventure travelers.

National significance

In May 2004, Songao and other members of the Rota legislative delegation requested planning assistance from the National Park Services in identifying and evaluating alternatives for the establishment of a park or conservation area on Rota.

NPS regional director Jon Jarvis then directed NPS Honolulu office Pacific Area director Bryan Harry and park planner Garry Barbano to carry out a reconnaissance survey of Rota’s natural and cultural resources and prepare a report in identifying any threats to the resource and alternatives for their protection and management.

Harry and Barbano found that Rota did contain significant resources. The survey found that it contains the most intact and unique collection of prehistoric sites in the CNMI, such as architectural features unique to ancient Chamorros. Mochon Latte Village, Chugai Pictograph Cave, Taga Latte Stone Quarry, and Alaguan Bay Ancient Village showed these significant cultural resources.

The survey also included Rota’s natural resources, which found that Rota’s limestone forests are the most intact and most extensive examples of primary, native limestone forests remaining in the CNMI, having been spared during World War II. The forest contains endangered bird species, threatened species of fruit bats, and numerous species of invertebrates that are proposed for listing as threatened or endangered.

NPS noted that no national park had examples of unique prehistoric architecture of the Chamorro people, art, and settlements ever.

“I am very happy to hear that because it was a lot of hard work that we did during the 13th and 14th Legislature and give credit to all my colleagues Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), Sen. Victor Hocog (R-Rota), and those involved in the fact finding of the Rota National Park and all the communications that we’ve been having with the National Park Service and having this passed now and coming to reality is going to put Rota and CNMI on the map and be an opportunity for employment for local people,” Songao said.

FHB employees, retirees give $637,781 to 31 charities

HAGÅTÑA, Guam--First Hawaiian Bank employees and retirees made a record gift of $637,781 to 31 charities as part of the bank’s annual Kokua Mai employee giving campaign. This was the biggest amount ever raised through Kokua Mai. Since Kokua Mai’s inception in 2007, bank employees and retirees have donated more than $4.7 million to support charities in Hawaii, Guam and the CNMI, according to an announcement yesterday by Bob Harrison, First Hawaiian Bank chairman, president and chief executive officer.

» More than $4.7 million raised for charity since 2007

“Contributions to Kokua Mai are completely voluntary; to have 98 percent of our employees participate in this effort is tremendous and says a lot of about the generosity and caring our employees have for their community,” Harrison said. “In addition to monetary donations, our employees are also out in the community volunteering their time and talents to help various nonprofits throughout the year.”

For the second year in a row, 98 percent of First Hawaiian Bank employees made monetary contributions to assist Kokua Mai charities. The bank, its Foundation and employees annually donate more than $3.0 million to over 400 charities making it one of the largest corporate contributors to charity in Hawaii, Guam and the CNMI.

First Hawaiian Bank established its Kokua Mai giving program to ensure 100 percent of employee donations go directly to local charities. The online giving program is completely run by employees. This year’s Kokua Mai campaign ran from Oct. 15 through Nov. 14 with employees conducting department fundraisers throughout.

Each year the bank’s branches serve as collection points for various charitable causes including the Star-Advertiser Good Neighbor Fund, Special Olympics, and the Aloha for Puna Fund to support recovery and relief efforts on the Big Island.

First Hawaiian Bank (www.fhb.com) with $18.1 billion in assets is Hawaii’s oldest and largest bank. The bank operates 57 branches in Hawaii, three on Guam and two on Saipan. ***(FHB)***

SIDEBAR

BENEFICIARIES

2014 First Hawaiian Bank Kokua Mai Charities:

- American Red Cross, Hawaii , Guam & Northern Mariana Islands Chapters
- Aloha Harvest
- Aloha United Way
- Ayuda Foundation
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters Hawaii
- Boys and Girls Club of Hawaii
- Catholic Charities
- Child and Family Service
- Domestic Violence Action Center
- Easter Seals Hawaii
- Family Programs Hawaii
- Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc.
- Hale Makua
- Hawaii Children’s Cancer Foundation
- Hawaii Foodbank
- Hawaii Island United Way
- HUGS
- Imua Family Services
- Kama`aina Kids
- Kauai Hospice
- Kauai United Way
- Lanai Community Association
- Make-A-Wish Hawaii and Guam
- Maui United Way
- Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii
- Palama Settlement
- Pali Momi Women’s Center Fund
- Salvation Army, Hawaiian & Pacific Island Division
- Special Olympics Hawaii, Inc.
- Teach for America
- Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

Rota’s RHI erects new walkway, bus stops for students

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Just in time for the holidays, Rota students have five new bus stops around the island and a sheltered walkway at the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr. and Sr. High School.

According to RHI school principal Sharlene Manglona, the projects’ combined worth is $250,000. The funds, she said, were procured through an initiative introduced by former senator Juan Ayuyu.

“He helped us find money under a legislative bill and we eventually got some Capital Improvement Project funding,” Manglona said.

A portion of the $250,000 appropriation was allocated to the Rota Mayor’s Office, which was ultimately responsible for the construction of the bus stops in Sinapalo and Songsong villages.

THOMAS MANGLONA II
Construction workers install the tin roof on the nearly finished sheltered walkway for Rota’s junior and high school students.

The remanding funds went toward building a much needed sheltered walkway at the junior and senior high school, to protect students from the rain and sun as they walk to the school cafeteria and classrooms.

“The campus is just so big and due to safety reason we don’t want kids running from one class to the other when it is raining,” Manglona said. “[Now] the kids are happy.”

Construction for the sheltered walkway started in April and was expected to be completed in August. However, it was delayed and Manglona hopes for it to be finished by the end of Christmas break next year, Jan. 5, 2015.

The project is going through its final phase, which includes the painting of columns, installation of gutters, and roof placement.

Senior student Reann Camacho said the new walkway will benefit students positively.

“Now we won’t get wet when we walk to class. We usually run from building to building and get soaked.”

Fellow senior Neri Jingco said the project is a good investment for her school. “So many of us suffer when it rains or even if it’s really hot. It’s a good thing to have a place to shelter us when we walk,” she said.

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The 670 Cultural Club of Dandan Middle School did a Christmas caroling for those who supported and aided the needs of the school. There were 50 students, six advisers and four band members who took part in the caroling. We caroled at the Manam’ko Center, Fire Station in Susupe, Mayor’s Office, DPW and Delegate Kilili Sablan’s office. Photo shows the DMS 670 Cultural Club and Congressman Kilili Sablan.

2014 Christmas in the Marianas Parade

PHOTOS By Jayson Camacho

Chacha Oceanview Junior High School float show their island floral Christmas theme during the parade.

A float festooned with Christmas decorations is a sight to see during the parade.

Saipan Mayor's Office staff holds a version of their adopt-a-dog sign during the parade.

One community member carries a puppy around at the parade grounds.

The parade of dogs, done in collaboration with the Saipan Mayor's Office, show love for the homeless dogs here in the CNMI by promoting an adoption program for dogs in the shelter.

Children in their Christmas costumes.

Children using recycled and creative Christmas costumes lead the parade near the Paseo de Marianas.

Using recycled materials, this float brightened the road with its numerous Christmas lights.

Children inside a tractor looking float decorated with foil.

"Mr. And Ms. Claus" in their sleigh during the parade.

Business

California puzzles over safety of driverless cars

LOS ANGELES (AP)—California's Department of Motor Vehicles will miss a year-end deadline to adopt new rules for cars of the future because regulators first have to figure out how they'll know whether "driverless" vehicles are safe.

It's a rare case of the law getting ahead of an emerging technology and reflects regulators' struggle to balance consumer protection with innovation.

Safety is a chief selling point, since self-driving cars—thanks to an array of sensors—promise to have much greater road awareness and quicker reaction time than people. Plus, they won't text, drink or doze off.

Though the cars are at least a few years away from showrooms, seven companies are testing prototypes on California's roads, and regulators have questions: Do they obey all traffic laws? What if their computers freeze? Can they smoothly hand control back to human drivers?

AP

This file photo taken Tuesday, May 13, 2014 shows a row of Google self-driving cars outside the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, Calif.

DMV officials say they won't let the public get self-driving cars until someone can certify that they don't pose an undue risk. The problem is that the technology remains so new there are no accepted standards to verify its safety. Absent standards, certifying safety would be like grading a test without an answer key.

Broadly, the department has three options: It could follow the current U.S. system, in which manufacturers self-certify their vehicles; it could opt for a European system, in which independent companies verify safety; or the state could (implausibly) get into the testing business.

"It's a huge undertaking," said Bernard Soriano, who oversees the DMV's regulatory process. "There are all of these issues that need to be adequately answered."

Manufacturers generally would prefer self-certification. That may be where California ends up, but for now the DMV is exploring independent certification—something that doesn't exist for driverless cars.

In July, the DMV asked third-party testers whether they'd be interested in getting into the game. The department doesn't have the expertise to create a safety standard and testing framework, so "the department wanted to get a very good sense of what is out there in the market," according to Russia Chavis, a deputy secretary at the California State Transportation Agency, which oversees the DMV and requested a deeper exploration of third-party alternatives to self-certification.

Two large European testers and two businesses in Ohio responded to the DMV's request. None was ready to implement a program immediately.

So the department is asking industry, consumer groups and other interested parties to gather in January for a public workshop on safety standards.

Whatever course California officials take could influence how other states—and perhaps even the federal government—approach the issue. California is such a large consumer market that in many cases its rules become de facto national standards.

Federal transportation officials have said they don't plan to write driverless car safety standards any time soon, and they don't want states writing their own. SAE International, an association of engineers, has been developing a set of safety guidelines—but those are for vehicle testing and don't get into specific performance levels that would be needed for commercially available cars.

South Korea lowers outlook on weak private sector

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea lowered its growth forecast for next year, citing persistently weak sentiment among consumers and businesses. But the government predicted that overall economic conditions will improve from this year thanks to government measures, recovery in the U.S. economy and the fall in oil prices.

The finance ministry said Monday that Asia's fourth-largest economy will expand 3.8 percent in 2015. Six months ago, it forecast growth of 4.0 percent.

It also lowered its forecast for this year to 3.4 percent growth from the previous forecast of 3.7 percent. In 2013, South Korea's economy expanded 3.0 percent.

The downward revision, which still represents an improvement from the growth estimated for this year, shows the government's challenge in encouraging consumers to spend more and businesses to boost investment despite its expansionary policies and the central bank's two rate cuts this year.

Director-General Lee Chan-woo said the recovery in consumer spending and capital expenditure remained weaker than expected in the last two months as consumers and businesses still have great uncertainties about next year. The economic improvement in the last quarter stemmed mostly from the government policies.

The government will introduce measures next year to boost wages and to push businesses to use their cash reserves to create jobs and increase investment, he said.

As one of those measures, the country's national pension fund will play a more active role as a shareholder to pressure companies to increase dividends.

The government will also seek to increase minimum wages and spend nearly 60 percent of its annual budget during the first half of next year.

Lee said these measures will boost domestic demand and also reduce the economy's reliance on exports. South Korea's growth was mostly driven by exports of goods, such as cars and televisions, but the government has been trying to boost domestic demand. Next year, the contribution of domestic demand to growth will outpace that of exports according to Lee.

Tourism suffers in winter of EU-Russia discontent

PARIS (AP)—Russia's tensions with the West over Ukraine and the slump for the ruble are echoing through the French Alps—and unfortunately for some businesses, just in time for ski season.

Hoteliers, taxi drivers and ski stations in France's wintertime hotspots and beyond say a tourism boom by big-spending Russians in recent years is about to melt away because of Russia's economic crisis, Western sanctions and a drop in oil prices that is keeping both uber-rich and middle class Russians away as the year ends.

As Moscow and the West began a faceoff over violence in Ukraine this year, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that U.S and European sanctions would cut both ways. At times, they have: Few places have felt them as have European tourist getaways in the Alps or the Mediterranean. Tourism chiefs cite a one-two punch to Russian travel to the EU: First political strains over Ukraine dent enthusiasm for traveling to the EU, then the financial pain of a falling ruble and oil prices hit Russian pocketbooks.

The pain of falling Russian tourism also has been reported in Austria, Germany, Cyprus and England.

In France's Alps, the Russian reticence is yet another hit to a region suffering from a sluggish domestic economy and a recent lack of snow that forced the cancellation of World Cup races in Val d'Isere this month. Many Russians may be staying home for patriotic reasons, such as to test out the Sochi slopes of this year's Olympics instead of traveling abroad, some analysts say.

The ruble has sagged in recent months and hit a record low of 80 to the dollar this week. That depreciation has come alongside a tumble in the price of crude oil—a crucial cash generator for Russia's economy—to roughly half its summertime high of $107 a barrel.

When their pockets were bulging thanks to high oil prices in previous years, Russians rose to outstrip German and Swiss travelers and took fourth place among the most-frequent foreign visitors to the French Alps in winter—after Britons, Belgians, and the Dutch, consulting firm Comete Conseil says.

"We've received fewer reservations from Russian clients this year. We can draw parallels with what happened on the coast this summer, where they too were less present," said Carole Genevray, marketing director for Comete Conseil, which counts many French Alpine towns as clients. "It's more the geopolitical context than the financial one that has in fact limited Russian visits ... It is Ukraine, plain and simple."

In the Alps both in France and beyond, the impact will likely still be limited: other industry analysts note Russian visitors make up a tiny percentage of the total tourist traffic—far below domestic travelers, for example. Still, Russians' bulging pockets in recent years have made them a welcome customer base for old-school ski slopes eager to drum up new business.

Extramarital affair could result in husband losing job

Q: Here's the situation: Husband becomes romantically involved with his unmarried secretary. Wife reports the affair to management and sends secretary an article about respecting boundaries. Management tells both parties to end the affair and tells wife to stop harassing secretary or husband will lose his job.

Husband ends the affair, but secretary continues to pursue him, and they become involved again. When wife finds out, husband tells secretary that it's over. Now husband feels he must resign from the company in order to save the marriage. Any advice?

A: The advice depends upon who is asking the question. Since you are obviously attempting to disguise your identity, here are a few suggestions for everyone concerned.

If you are the husband, you need to determine why you were motivated to cheat. The problem may be a marital issue or a character defect, but either way, you clearly have some work to do. If you believe you were lured into this affair by an irresistible office temptress, then you are simply deluding yourself.

If you are the secretary, stop pursuing married men. You are only hurting people and creating a bleak future for yourself. The vast majority of illicit relationships go nowhere, so concentrate on single guys and do not even flirt with anyone wearing a wedding ring. Remember, a man who will cheat on his wife is also likely to cheat on you.

If you are the wife, you should read your own article on boundaries. Involving management in this domestic drama was unnecessary and inappropriate. If your objective was to get revenge, that was a childish move. Instead of focusing on the secretary's behavior, you need to figure out how this marriage got so off track.

In short, everyone involved in this little triangle needs to engage in some serious self-examination. Otherwise, this unhealthy pattern is quite likely to repeat.

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
Tribune *News Service*

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics. *Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.*

Q: One of my coworkers is giving me the silent treatment. "Tracy" misunderstood something I said, and now she won't talk to me or even walk by my desk. Whenever I try to explain, she says, "I'm not going to discuss it." Although I'm tired of the drama, I don't know how to fix this. Should I just let Tracy make a fool of herself even though it bothers me?

A: The short answer to your question is yes, because Tracy is acting like a sulky child. Since her goal is to upset you, any negative response will just be reinforcing. Her pouty reaction provides an excellent example of passive-aggressive behavior, which is the most destructive way to handle any disagreement.

Passive-aggressive types fear conflict, so they avoid unpleasant conversations. But since they have trouble letting go of angry feelings, they continue to express their unhappiness indirectly. This petulant behavior escalates the conflict, while their refusal to talk makes a resolution impossible.

Having made several attempts to discuss this issue with your moody colleague, you must now behave as though nothing is wrong. If you ignore her brooding and continue to speak and act normally, the odds are good that Tracy will eventually come around.

Nation

Killer of 2 NYC officers had long criminal history

NEW YORK (AP)—The gunman who fatally ambushed two police officers in their squad car had a long criminal record, a hatred for police and the government and an apparent history of mental instability that included an attempt to hang himself a year ago, authorities said Sunday.

Moments before opening fire, Ismaaiyl Brinsley approached people on the street and asked them to follow him on Instagram, then told them, "Watch what I'm going to do," Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce said.

A portrait of the Brooklyn-born gunman emerged as big-city police departments and union leaders around the country warned officers to change up their routines and insist on extra backup a day after Brinsley carried out what he portrayed online as retaliation for the slayings of black men at the hands of white police.

Brinsley was black; the slain officers were Asian and Hispanic.

Investigators were trying to determine if Brinsley had taken part in any protests over the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, whose names he invoked in his online threat, or simply latched on to the cause for the final act in a violent rampage.

They said he traveled frequently between the South and New York, where he fathered a child in Brooklyn, and had been in the city earlier in the week.

Brinsley, 28, had at least 19 arrests in Georgia and Ohio, spent two years in prison for gun possession and had a troubled childhood so violent that his mother was afraid of him, police said. He ranted online about police and the government and expressed "self-despair and anger at himself and where his life was," Boyce said.

Boyce said Brinsley's mother believed he had undiagnosed mental problems and may have been on medication at some point, but detectives were still trying to determine if he had a mental illness.

On Saturday afternoon, Brinsley approached a squad car from behind in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section and fired four shots, killing Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu. He then ran into a subway station and committed suicide.

Hours earlier, Brinsley had shot and wounded his ex-girlfriend at her home outside Baltimore, then made threatening posts online, including a vow to put "wings on pigs" and references to the Brown and Garner cases.

Baltimore-area police warned the New York department that Brinsley was in the city and bent on violence. But New York police were still getting the word out when Brinsley struck.

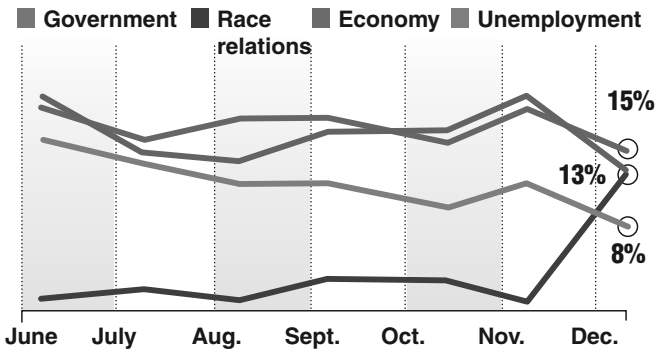
The slayings dramatically escalated tensions that have simmered for months over police killings of blacks.

The siege mentality was evident in several memos circulating among the rank and file at the 35,000-officer New York Police Department, the nation's largest.

A union-generated message warned police officers that they should respond to every radio call with two cars—"no matter what the opinion of the patrol supervisor"—and not make arrests "unless absolutely necessary." The president of the detectives union told members in a letter to work in threes when out on the street, wear bulletproof vests and keep aware of their surroundings.

Top four U.S. problems

A Gallup poll asked Americans what they thought the most important problems facing the country are today. Race relations is now tied with the economy as one of the top problems.



Source: Gallup
Graphic: Greg Good, Tribune News Service

AP

Police officers leave candles at an impromptu memorial near the site where two New York City police officers were killed in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014.

SIDEBAR

Neighbor talks about shooting before NYPD killings

TOWSON, Md. (AP)—The ex-girlfriend of the man who ambushed two NYPD officers screamed for help after she was shot and said: "I can't die like this, please please help me," according to a neighbor who said she saw the woman and called 911.

Yevette Seay told The Associated Press on Sunday that her neighbor, 29-year-old Shaneka Thompson, banged on her apartment door for help after being shot. Seay said she talked to Thompson through her closed front door and she could see the bloodied woman through the peep hole.

"I told her to hang in there. I was afraid to ask her too many questions because she was hysterical," Seay said.

Police said Thompson's ex-boyfriend, Ismaaiyl Brinsley, shot her in the stomach about 5:45 a.m. Saturday and then fled to New York, where he gunned down two officers in a squad car. Brinsley, who ended up killing himself, had vowed online to put "wings on pigs" after shooting Thompson.

Thompson was in critical condition at a University of Maryland Medical Center. She is expected to survive.

Seay said Thompson moved in a few months ago. The two would exchange hellos but Seay did not know her. Seay said she had heard her neighbors fight before, but the screaming got her out of bed Saturday morning.

"I could hear something going on and it wasn't pleasant. Then I heard some screaming, then she went out onto her balcony and screamed for help," Seay said.

According to Seay, Thompson said: "`He shot me, I don't want to die, I don't want to die.'"

Seay said Thompson wanted her to open up her door, but she didn't know what was going on, so she kept it closed and called 911. She said there was blood all over the carpet in the hallway.

Seay said police arrived in about seven or eight minutes.

Seay's sister had left the apartment to go to work and saw a man running through the parking lot, Seay said. After seeing news reports about the New York shooting and the suspect's photo, Seay's sister figured out it that she had seen Brinsley running.

"We were right there in the middle of that, and to know what he did afterwards was even more disturbing," Seay said.

US mulls putting NKorea on terrorism sponsor list

HONOLULU (AP)—President Barack Obama says the United States is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism as Washington decides how to respond to what he calls an "act of cybervandalism," not one of war, against a movie company.

Sony Pictures Entertainment, which said it canceled the theatrical release of "The Interview" after distributors refused to show it, pledged to find a way to get the film out. "How it's going to be distributed, I don't think anybody knows quite yet," a Sony lawyer said. The comedy involves a plot to assassinate North Korea's leader.

Obama is promising to respond "proportionately" to an attack that law enforcement blames on North Korea. "We're not going to be intimidated by some cyberhackers," he said.

The president said the U.S. would examine the facts to determine whether North Korea should land back on the terrorism sponsors list.

"We're going to review those through a process that's already in place," Obama told CNN's "State of the Union" in an interview broadcast Sunday. "I'll wait to review what the findings are."

While raising the possibility of a terrorism designation, Obama also asserted, "I don't think it was an act of war. I think it was an act of cybervandalism that was very costly, very expensive. We take it very seriously."

Obama's description drew immediate scorn from two Republicans who are longtime critics of his foreign policy.

"It is a new form of warfare, and we have to counter with that form of warfare with a better form of warfare," said Arizona Sen. John McCain.

Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina called it "an act of terrorism" and favored reimposing sanctions and adding North Korea to the terrorism list. The U.S. needs to "make is so hard on the North Koreans that they don't want to do this in the future."

North Korea spent two decades on the list until the Bush administration removed it in 2008 during nuclear negotiations. Only Iran, Sudan, Syria and Cuba remain on the list, which triggers sanctions that limit U.S. aid, defense exports and certain financial transactions.

Pope's role in Cuba deal fractures Cuban-American flock

MIAMI (AP)—The key role Pope Francis played encouraging talks between Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro left fractures among his flock in South Florida, where many older Roman Catholics equate the Castro brothers with the devil.

Many Catholics worldwide have expressed pride in seeing Francis stirring hopes of progress in communist Cuba, but some Cuban-Americans say their spiritual leader betrayed them.

"I'm still Catholic till the day I die," said Efrain Rivas, a 53-year-old maintenance man in Miami who was a political prisoner in Cuba for 16 years. "But I am a Catholic without a pope."

Rivas said he cried when Obama surprisingly announced a reversal of a half-century's efforts to isolate Cuba. Then, when he learned of Francis' role, he got angry.

Miami Archbishop Thomas Wenski acknowledged that some Catholics are "concerned or suspicious," but said many more exiles welcome the breakthrough, despite their suffering.

"The pain is real, but you can't build a future on top of resentments," Wenski told The Associated Press in an interview.

The Vatican has been reaching out to Cuba at least since Pope John Paul II, who declared during his historic 1998 visit to the island, "May Cuba, with all its magnificent potential, open itself up to the world, and may the world open itself up to Cuba." Discussions continued under Pope Benedict XVI, who visited Cuba in 2012. And Francis, the first Latin American pope, has advocated for an end to the U.S. embargo since participating in John Paul's visit to Cuba as the soon-to-be-named Cardinal of Buenos Aires.

Cuban Cardinal Jaime Ortega, who is close to Francis, set up the papal visits and has been decisive in improving ties between the church and the officially atheist state since becoming Havana archbishop in 1981. This frustrates some older Catholics who wanted the church to use its unique position inside Cuba to take a harder line.

"The church is contaminated," said Miguel Saavedra, a 57-year-old Miami mechanic who leads an anti-Castro group and wears a gold cross as a sign of his Catholic faith.

Exiles incensed by the diplomacy openly wonder: Was Francis strong-armed by President Barack Obama? Does he understand how terrible the Castro brothers are? Was he perhaps making a foolhardy bid to cement his change-making image?

Asia

Pakistan makes arrests in Taliban school carnage

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Authorities made several arrests in the case of the Taliban school attack that killed 148 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, on Sunday, officials said.

"Quite a few suspects who were facilitators in one way or the other have been taken into custody," Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said, adding that the interrogations were "moving ahead in a positive manner." He did not disclose their identities or say how many they were.

Seven Taliban gunmen wearing explosives belts stunned the world on Tuesday by storming into the military run school and slaughtering 148 people, including 132 students. Another nearly 121 students were wounded in the ensuing eight-hour siege of the school, located in an area where many military families live.

The group claims it fights to establish a ruling system based on its own harsh brand of Islam. It has killed thousands over nearly a decade.

The Taliban say they attacked the school in revenge for an army operation against them in North Waziristan, launched in mid-June. The army says it has so far killed over 1,200 militants in the operation.

The government bombed the militants' hideouts in country's tribal area along the Afghan border in response, and also lifted a ban on the execution of convicted terrorists.

Over the weekend, it executed six men convicted on terrorism charges.

Two of the convicts were hanged Friday, and another four on Sunday, according to two Pakistani government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters.

All six belonged to local Pakistani militant groups who had turned against the state, and were convicted for involvement in two attempts to assassinate former President Pervez Musharraf. One was also convicted of leading a militant siege of Pakistani army headquarters in garrison city of Rawalpindi in 2009.

Local militants have threatened attacks to avenge the hanged men.

Khan, the minister, said Pakistan was at war with the militants. He appealed to the nation to help authorities in a countrywide crackdown on the insurgents.

IN A CHRISTMAS MOOD AP

School children touch an orangutan named "Pacquiao" as zoo owner Manny Tangco gives them a tour ahead of this week's Christmas celebration in suburban Malabon city, north of Manila, Philippines. The yearly treat is aimed at encouraging residents to be sensitive to the feelings of animals especially when exploding firecrackers for the raucous celebration.

N. Korea threatens strikes on the US amid hacking claims

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—President Barack Obama is "recklessly" spreading rumors of a Pyongyang-orchestrated cyberattack of Sony Pictures, North Korea says, as it warns of strikes against the White House, Pentagon and "the whole U.S. mainland, that cesspool of terrorism."

Such rhetoric is routine from North Korea's massive propaganda machine during times of high tension with Washington. But a long statement from the powerful National Defense Commission late Sunday also underscores Pyongyang's sensitivity at a movie whose plot focuses on the assassination of its leader Kim Jong Un, who is the beneficiary of a decades-long cult of personality built around his family dynasty.

The U.S. blames North Korea for the cyberattack that escalated to threats of terror attacks against U.S. movie theaters and caused Sony to cancel "The Interview's" release.

Obama, who promised to respond "proportionately" to the attack, told CNN's "State of the Union" in an interview broadcast Sunday that Washington is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism

The National Defense Commission, led by Kim, warned that its 1.2 million-member army is ready to use all types of warfare against the U.S.

"Our toughest counteraction will be boldly taken against the White House, the Pentagon and the whole U.S. mainland, the cesspool of terrorism, by far surpassing the `symmetric counteraction' declared by Obama," said the commission's Policy Department in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

North Korea has said it knows how to prove it had nothing to do with the hacking and proposed a joint investigation with the U.S.

Taliban kill 7 Afghan policemen at checkpoint

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban attacked a checkpoint in northern Afghanistan, killing at least seven policemen, an official said Sunday. In Kabul, a reporter wounded in an attack earlier this month on a French-run school died of his injuries.

The checkpoint attack took place in Jawzjan province, said Abdul Manan Raoufi, the region's police operational chief. Along with the seven killed, five other policemen were wounded in the attack late Saturday in a village in the province's Qashtepa district.

Police reinforcements were sent to the location and a gunbattle ensued in which five insurgents died, Raoufi said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, a battle has been raging between insurgents and government forces for more than a week in eastern Kunar province, said Abdul Ghani Musamem, spokesman for provincial governor. He said it was difficult to determine exact casualty figures, though at least three civilians had been killed and around 28 insurgents so far.

"There are casualties among civilians who are stuck in the battlefield but we don't know how many right now," he said.

Elsewhere in Kunar, seven civilians, including two children, were killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Nari district late Saturday, the spokesman said. Three other civilians were wounded in the blast.

Filipino family wants US Marine in local jail during trial

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A U.S. Marine charged with killing a transgender Filipino woman he picked up in a bar was brought back Friday to the city where the attack occurred two months ago, and lawyers of the victim say they will seek his detention in a local jail during his murder trial.

Relatives of Jennifer Laude saw the suspect, Marine Pfc Joseph Scott Pemberton, for the first time since the killing as he was being photographed and fingerprinted by officers of the Regional Trial Court in Olongapo City, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Manila.

The U.S. Embassy has already rejected a request by the Philippine government to take custody of Pemberton, citing a provision in the Visiting Forces Agreement between the countries that gives Americans custodial rights over a U.S. service member facing charges while judicial proceedings are ongoing.

American Ambassador Philip Goldberg said the U.S. government was «sensitive» to Filipino sentiments on the killing and agreed to have Pemberton detained inside a Philippine military camp in Manila but under U.S. guard.

Pemberton was brought from the camp to Olongapo early Friday under heavy guard, including U.S. armed service personnel assigned to secure him.

He was whisked through a backdoor into the courtroom, evading dozens of journalists and cameramen waiting for him. After the booking procedures, he was driven back to Manila.

Laude family lawyer Virgie Suarez said she expects the judge to soon rule on where he should be detained.

"He (Pemberton) was not on official duty and he committed the crime in Olongapo, so he should be detained here in Olongapo," she told reporters.

Laude's sister, Marilou, said she had "mixed emotions—scared ... and trembling with anger" when she first saw Pemberton during the booking proceedings. She said Pemberton was smiling before he saw her. "He quickly looked away from me and never smiled again," she said.

"I wanted to come close to him to ask him why he killed my sibling, to smash his head on the wall, but there were too many (guards) around him," she said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Bomb blast kills 3, hurts 5 in northeastern India

GUWAHATI, India (AP)—An explosion in the parking lot of a bus station early Sunday killed three people and wounded five others in India's remote northeastern state, where several separatist groups operate, police said. The homemade bomb went off in Imphal, the capital of Manipur state, killing three construction workers, said police Superintendent Ibomcha Singh. Five other men were hospitalized. No one has claimed responsibility for the blast. Imphal is about 550 kilometers (340 miles) southeast of Guwahati, the biggest city in the region. At least 17 separatist groups are active in Manipur state and often stage hit-and-run attacks on government forces. Their demands range from greater autonomy for the state to an independent homeland for the people of Manipur.

Strong quake hits east Indonesia; no tsunami threat

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A strong earthquake struck off the coast of eastern Indonesia on Sunday evening, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, and authorities said there was no threat of a tsunami. The magnitude-6.6 quake was centered 157 kilometers (98 miles) west of the town of Tobelo, which is on the island of Halmahera, the U.S. Geological Survey said. The quake had a depth of 55 kilometers (34 miles). The Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said there was no threat of a tsunami and did not issue a warning. Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency also said the quake did not have the potential to trigger a tsunami. Indonesia is prone to earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin. In December 2004, a massive earthquake off Sumatra island triggered a tsunami that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries.

World

France: Driver goes on rampage

PARIS (AP)—A driver deliberately slammed his car into crowds around the city of Dijon in eastern France on Sunday, raising concerns at a time when Islamic extremists are calling for attacks in France.

The Sunday night rampage came a day after a knife attack on police in another French town that counter-terrorist police are investigating. The government said the motive for Sunday's attack was unclear.

The government stepped up security measures for police and other authorities.

In Sunday's incident, police arrested the out-of-control driver after he injured at least 11 people, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The Islamic State group and other terrorist organizations have repeatedly called for attacks against France, notably because of the French military's participation in U.S.-led airstrikes in Iraq. Some extremists have specifically suggested that anyone angry at the French government could use weapons easily at hand—such as cars or knives—to stage "lone wolf" attacks.

The Interior Ministry said the driver in Sunday's car attack, a 40-year-old driving a Renault Clio, was known to police for minor offenses in the 1990s.

Police union official Michel Bonnet said on BFM television that some witnesses apparently heard the driver say "Allahu Akbar," or "God Is Great," and refer to the "children of Palestine." But the Interior Ministry would not confirm that.

In an indication of how seriously the government is taking the incident, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was to head to Dijon on Monday.

Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet said it was too early to say whether there was any connection between the Sunday car attack and the knife attack in Joue-les-Tours in central France on Saturday.

In the Saturday incident, two police officers were seriously injured and the attacker was killed, according to the ministry. While the motive remains uncertain, anti-terrorism police are involved in the investigation.

Iraqi Kurds push into contested northern town

MOUNT SINJAR, Iraq (AP)—With coalition warplanes circling overhead, Kurdish fighters pushed into the contested northern Iraqi town of Sinjar on Sunday, touching off heavy clashes with Islamic State militants who have controlled the area for months.

The battle for Sinjar and the surrounding areas has become the latest focus in the campaign to take back territory lost to the Islamic State group during the militants' summer blitz that captured much of northern and western Iraq. IS also controls a large chunk of neighboring Syria.

Last week, Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighters launched the operation to retake Sinjar. So far, they've managed to open up a passageway to Mount Sinjar, a long, rugged mountain that overlooks the town. That push allowed some of the thousands of Yazidis trapped on the mountain since the town's fall in August to evacuate.

On Sunday, pershmerga fighters said they advanced into Sinjar itself. Loud explosions and intense gunbattles could be heard echoing from inside the town as U.S.-led coalition warplanes bombed Islamic State militants from the sky.

"We were fighting inside Sinjar. There were snipers everywhere inside," said 28-year-old Kurdish fighter Nabil Mohammed. "One of them fired a rocket-propelled grenade at us. I ran into a house and I was hit by a sniper's bullet in my thigh."

Mohammed spoke in a field hospital on Mount Sinjar, where he and many of the 20 wounded Kurdish fighters were brought for treatment. Ambulances rushed the wounded to the clinic. Inside, fighters wept as the body of one man killed by a sniper's bullet was placed into a body bag.

Earlier Sunday, the president of the self-ruled northern Kurdish region, Masoud Bazani, toured Kurdish positions on Mount Sinjar, where he vowed to defeat the Islamic State group.

"Most of the districts are under our control," Barzani told peshmerga troops. "We will crush the Islamic State."

At least 15 Kurdish fighters wounded in Sunday's clashes were brought from the frontlines to a makeshift clinic on the mountain.

Australian woman charged with murder of 8 children

CAIRNS, Australia (AP)—A judge on Monday rejected a plea by lawyers for an Australia woman charged with killing eight children to have the next hearing held in a mental health court.

Mersane Warria, charged under her full name of Raina Mersane Ina Thaiday, is facing eight counts of murder in the deaths of seven of her children and her niece, whose bodies were found inside her northern Australia home last week.

Police were called to the home in the Cairns suburb of Manoora on Friday morning after receiving a report of a woman with serious injuries. When they got to the house, they found the bodies, along with Warria, who was suffering from stab wounds to the chest.

Warria, 37, did not attend a brief hearing at Cairns Magistrates Court on Monday as she is recovering from her injuries in a hospital.

Magistrate Alan Comans rejected a request from Warria's lawyer, Steve MacFarlane, to hold the case's next hearing in a mental health court. Criminal cases are sometimes referred to such courts if the defendant is believed to be mentally ill or has an intellectual disability. The court then decides what the defendant's mental state was when they committed the offense.

Outside court, MacFarlane said his client was expected to be examined by psychiatrists and that the case could still be heard in mental health court after that assessment was completed.

"I think she probably knows what happened but doesn't realize it and it hasn't sunk in," he said. "I've spoken to her and she's coping the best that she can at the moment."

The case has been adjourned until Jan. 30.

Police haven't said how the children died, but Queensland Police Detective Inspector Bruno Asnicar said that they're examining several knives in the home that may have been the weapon used to kill them. Suffocation was also a possible cause of death, he said.

"We are considering that and that's why it's taking a bit of time," he said on Sunday. "It could be a range of things, from suffocation to a thousand other things."

Officials were still trying to determine exactly what happened inside the house, and had collected more than 100 witness statements, he said.

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT

In Loving Memory of

†Christopher S. Santos

April 10, 1990 - December 19, 2014

Son : Ezel Carter–Santos
Parents : Rosalina Santos – Magofna
Antonio C. Magofna (Step Father)
Ramon Ch Santos
Tess G. Santos (Step Mother)
Grandmother : Antonia Aguon Santos

Brothers , Sisters and In laws:
Chayse Raymond Santos & Jessica Macaranas and Children
Chasmyns Santos & David John Apatang and Children
Mary Grace Santos and Joel Matagolai
Margieray Santos
Amber-Lynn Santos Quinata
Almohdo Franco Santos
Tonnya Lyn Santos Magofna
Catalina Keona Cabrera

Daily Mass of Intentions are being celebrated at Sta. Remedios Church in Tanapag along with the Aguinaldo Mass at 5:00AM.

Holy Rosary is being prayed nightly at 7:00pm at Sta. Remedios Church.

Funeral Service will be announce at a later date.

Please join us in Prayers,

The Family

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Vicente Edpic Belibei

Lovingly Known As "**Mechanny**"

October 31, 1949 – December 17, 2014

In his new life, †Vicente now joins his:
Parents: †Belibei E. Kato
†Timang R. Belibei
Parents In Law: †Vitaliano Aguila
†Maria Aguila
Brother: †Herman Nobou Belibei
Sister: †Maria "Kutei" M. Belibei
Brother In-Laws: †Vitaliano Aguila, Jr.
†Felix Aguila
†Roger Aguila

His Memories Will Forever Live In Hearts Of His:
Wife: Maria Asuncion Belibei

Children and Families:
Jellymay M. & Jose F. Blas (Joseph (Isabel, Jaziah), Ke'ala)
Jay Ignacio (ken Lester)
Ritamae I. & Ryan Jobog (Justin)
Charlotte / Bernie Guinhawa

Brothers and Sisters and In-laws:
†Vitaliano Jr. & Caridad Aguila and Children, †Felix & Norma Aguila and Children, †Roger & Baby Aguila and Children, Rosemarie A. & Florante Vargas and Children, Agnes B. & Abina D. Sullivan (Avery Lee (Angelica, Aurora,Alyssa), Abiegayle/Ron Smau (Isaiah, Aaron Joseph), Curtis & Dorothy Elobt and Children, Douglas & Karen Elobt and Children, Bernadita Elobt and Children, Eugenia ELobt and Children, Tommy Rechelulk (Griffith/Loanalyn [Laealdrie Jesslynne], Jayvits/ Yuka [Jesse Kazuo]), Marilyn A. & Jojo Del Mundo and Children, Ronnie & Susan Aguila and Children, Willy & Virginia Aguila and Children

Special Friends: Brenda / Eddie, Arvin, Ramon / Arlene

He will greatly missed by numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Daily Mass of Intention is being celebrated each evening at 6:00pm at San Antonio Church.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, December 26, 2014. His remains will be escorted from Nuestra Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 7:30am to San Antonio Church. Responso Service will be at 8:00am followed by Holy Rosary. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 9:30 am followed by Interment Service at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Please join us in prayers,

Maria A. Belibei , Jellymay and Family

Overdrive

UNDER THE HOOD

Renewing brake fluid is important

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

It's a good idea to renew brake fluid perhaps every three or four years. Brake fluid is hygroscopic, meaning that it attracts moisture. Over time, airborne moisture sneaks into your brake fluid, which can lead to brake component corrosion and fluid fade. An antilock braking system-equipped vehicle's hydraulic control unit is very expensive and worth protecting. It's odd some carmakers don't specify brake fluid replacement in their maintenance schedule.

The most important reason for periodic fluid changes is to ensure the fluid doesn't boil during heavy brake operation. Your brake system uses hydraulic (liquid) force to apply the brakes and the brake fluid absorbs some of the heat produced by the brakes. Liquid is not compressible, but a boiling vapor is. Should the water mixed in with your fluid turn to vapor, the pedal will turn to mush and the car may fail to stop.

New brake fluid has a boiling point of 401 degrees (DOT-3 fluid) or 446 degrees (DOT-4 fluid). When either fluid type becomes diluted to 3 percent or 4 percent moisture (water) content, the boiling point is reduced by about 150 degrees, increasing the chance of fluid fade. For an around-town grocery getter this isn't a huge issue, but with higher speed driving and/or mountainous or towing conditions, it could become a really big problem.

Flushing/renewing brake fluid typically involves releasing/removing fluid at each wheel's brake caliper or wheel cylinder bleeder valve, utilizing a suction generating tool. The bleeder screws resemble small, hollow bolts and are sometimes stubborn to open. ABS vehicles often require unique bleeding procedures. It's best to leave this job to a pro unless you can obtain and follow the appropriate service information, and have access to a vacuum bleeder.

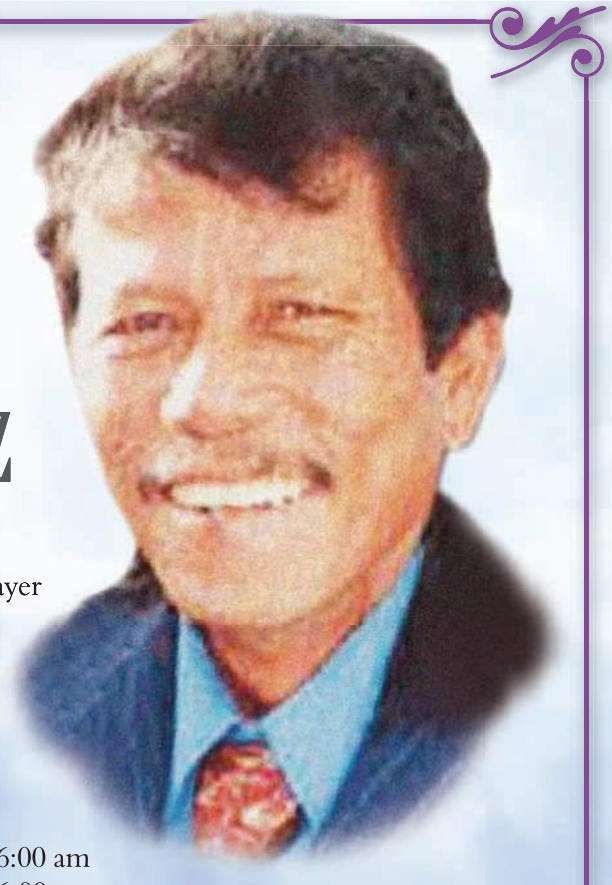
Those living in a high humidity area and planning to keep their car for many years might go for the three-year renewal schedule. I confess to going perhaps four or five years on my own vehicles in a fairly dry climate. I package the brake fluid service with coolant renewal, new belts, hoses, fuel filter and all driveline fluids. This is also a good time to scrutinize battery condition, suspension and steering components, and other parts that aren't listed in the maintenance schedule.

First Year
Death Anniversary

We, the wife and children of the late,

†VICENTE MUNA DELA CRUZ

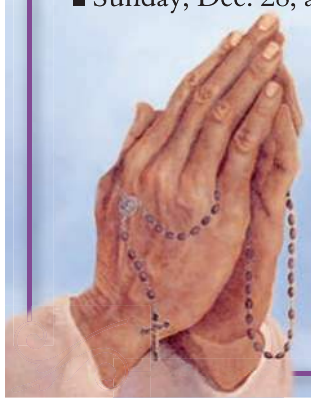
Lovingly known as "Pabu"



Invite all our families, relatives, and friends to join us in prayer as we commemorate the first year death anniversary of our dearly beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Daily mass of intention is offered at San Jose Church, Tinian beginning:

- Wednesday, December 24, at 5:00 am
- Thursday, Dec. 25, at 8:00 pm
- Friday, Dec. 26, at 6:00 am
- Saturday, Dec. 27, at 6:00 am
- Sunday, Dec. 28, at 6:00 am
- Monday, Dec. 29, at 6:00 am
- Tuesday, Dec. 30, at 6:00 am
- Wednesday, Dec. 31, 6:00 pm
- Thursday, January 1 at 8:00 am



On the final day, Thursday, January 1st, 2015 breakfast will be served at the Dynasty Ballroom immediately after mass.

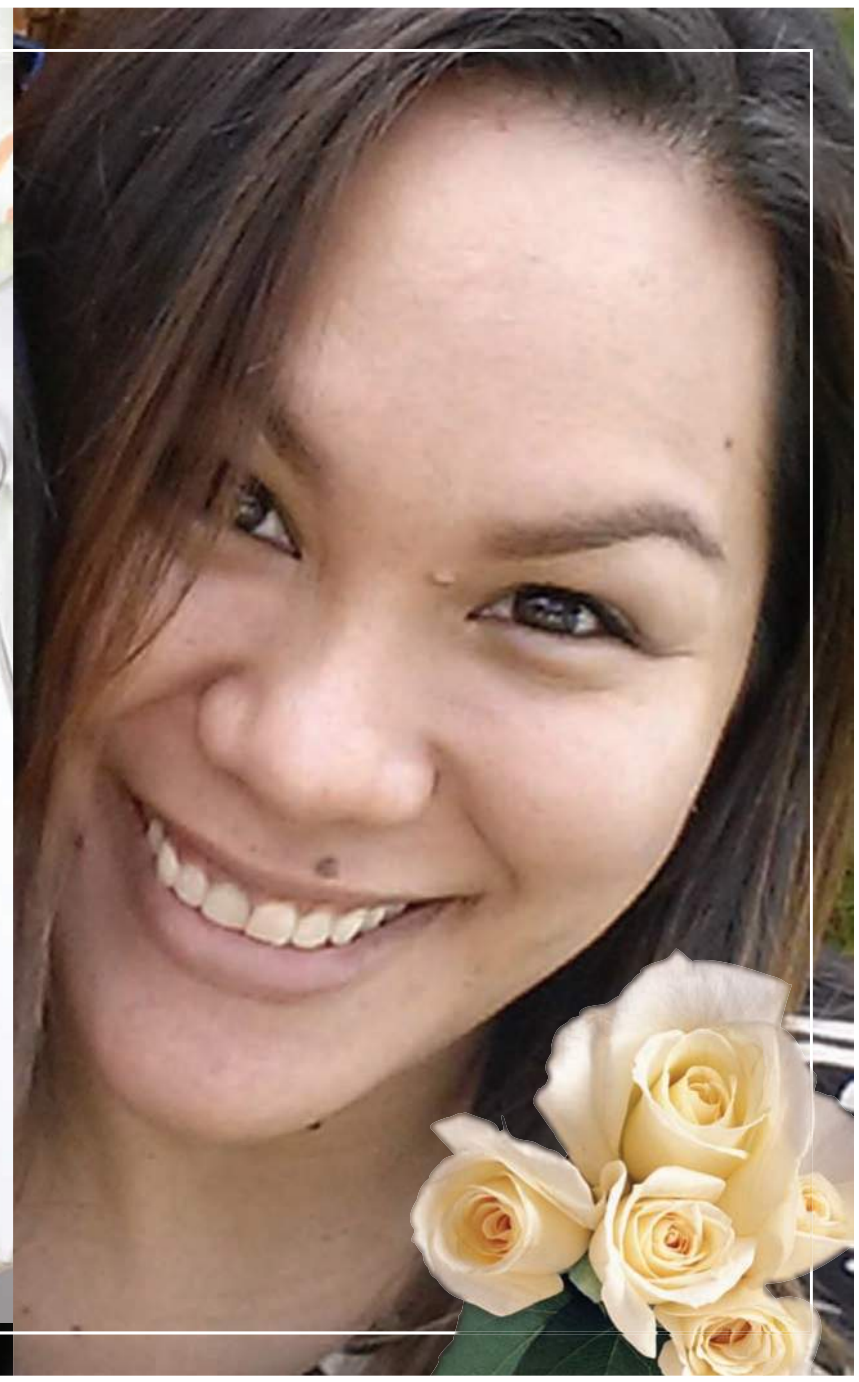
Your presence, thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated

Si Yu'us Ma'ase & Thank You.
From

Carmen, and children

In Celebration of Her New Life

†Joana Katrina S. Vitug



Born to life on October 31, 1984, was called to her eternal life on December 19, 2014 at the age of 30 years old.

Her Memories Will Forever Live On In The Hearts Of Her:
Parents: Lucille and Manny Vitug

Children: Kristina Jane, Edward Santiago III, Stacy Lucille, and Ezel Karter

Brothers and Sisters, In-laws and children:
Johanne Kristine & Les Wolf (Kelvin Ethan Legna, Jonathan Lizardo, Lars Anthony, and Nirvana Krisles Elena)
John Kristoffer & Magdalena Sarmiento (Matthew Kristoffer)
Miles & Evelyn King

And: Jerry and Maggie Crisostomo. Kenneth Jerry, Dindin, and Noby
Edward Arriola, Jr. and family

Nightly rosary will be held at San Jose, at 7pm. But will be at 3:30 in the afternoon on the 24th of December.

On Saturday, December 27th, her remains will be escorted from Borja Funeral Home at 7:30am to San Jose Parish. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00am followed immediately by Interment Services at Tanapag Cemetery.

Thank you very much

The Family

Life & Style

How do you joke about the Sony hacking? A little carefully

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP NATIONAL WRITER

How do you joke about the Sony hacking story? After all, it was an attempt at comedy that launched this whole sobering mess.

If you're Chris Rock, you joke about it cleverly but carefully. Promoting his new movie "Top Five" this week, he noted an added bonus: "My movie's very Korean-friendly. There are no jokes about North Korea in `Top Five.' If you're Korean, go out and see `Top Five.' You will enjoy it."

Given that the fallout over an unabashedly silly movie—"The Interview," which Sony shelved last week after a stunning cyberattack by hackers the U.S. has linked to North Korea—has escalated into a serious global situation, one would think comedy writers might be a wee bit skittish just now.

But they ARE in the business of satire, and this is one of the biggest entertainment stories in years.

And so, NBC's "Saturday Night Live" didn't wait long to bring up the scandal—in fact, it didn't wait one second. The show opened with Mike Myers returning as Dr. Evil from the "Austin Powers" movies, taking jabs at Sony, North Korea AND Hollywood. Oh, and Republicans, and "The Interview" actor James Franco's Oscar-hosting skills.

"There's already a GOP," Myers said, referring to the hackers who call themselves Guardians of Peace, "and they're already an evil organization." Referring to hackers' threats of terrorism over the movie, he said that wasn't necessary: "It's easy to kill a movie. Just move it to January." As for Franco, whose character in the film is tasked with assassinating North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, he noted: "The man singlehandedly almost killed the Oscars!"

Later, though, the show played with the idea that maybe it's all a little soon. Comic Bobby Moynihan appeared as Kim Jong Un on "Weekend Update," declaring he wasn't afraid. But then red target marks appeared on his torso, and he reversed course: "I'm Seth Rogen, everybody!" he said, trying to quickly mimic Rogen, a star and director of the film, before skedaddling off the set.

AP
In this Dec. 3, 2014 file photo, actor Chris Rock attends the premiere of "Top Five" at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York.

All in jest, but there probably IS a sense of "Is it too soon?" out there, says Janice Min, a veteran entertainment industry observer who oversees The Hollywood Reporter and Billboard.

"I would say we're in an unprecedented era of fear right now," she says, referring to the chilling cyberattack that saw thousands of Sony emails—some deeply embarrassing—and other materials posted online. Things escalated dramatically when hackers then threatened violence against moviegoers, leading theater chains to pull out and Sony to cancel the Christmas opening.

"There's often a sense of schadenfreude in Hollywood, if something happens to a movie or an executive," Min says. "But in this case the fear is so palpable, people are thinking, what if this were me?"

Even in campaigns for the upcoming awards season in Hollywood, Min notes, "every publicist in town will be coaching their stars on what to say and what not to say, or what to post on Twitter—everything will be very measured."

And so naturally, she adds, there may be a chilling effect on comedy—one that might affect the sharpness of the jokes, for example, at the Golden Globes or the Oscars. "I'm going to venture that at least until the issues are resolved, everyone's too scared, and you don't want to be the one making that North Korea joke because you don't want to be a target yourself," Min says.

Given the magnitude of the events, of course, it's hard to imagine they won't be referenced at the awards shows, especially the early ones. "It's the elephant in the room," says Tim Gray, awards editor for Variety. "You can't pretend it didn't happen."

But just how "safe" the subject may feel will depend on developments in the swift-moving story, which could, at this rate, change many times before sharp-tongued hosts Tina Fey and Amy Poehler take the stage at the Jan. 11 Globes, where the humor is generally more raucous—and boozy—than at the Feb. 22 Oscars. (Producers for both the Globes and the Oscars declined interview requests about plans for the shows.)

Glenn Schwartz, a longtime Hollywood publicist specializing in comedy, notes that awards shows are a combination of the funny and the serious, so he expects to see references to the Sony hack pop up both ways. "There will be some jokes in a monologue, and one or two activist actors using it as a platform to talk about censorship," he predicts.

But Schwartz adds: "This is really uncharted territory. Nobody wants to be responsible for making it worse." And that, he says, is a shame: "Comedy has been offending people for years. That's what's great about it."

The censorship issue is a hot-button topic in Hollywood; George Clooney, in an interview with the trade site Deadline, urged Sony to "do whatever you can to get this movie out. Not because everybody has to see the movie, but because I'm not going to be told we can't see the movie." President Barack Obama subsequently said he felt Sony had made a mistake in shelving the film. Jimmy Kimmel, in a serious tweet, called Sony's decision an "un-American act of cowardice." Filmmaker Judd Apatow said it was "disgraceful" that theaters weren't showing the film.

Two other North Korea-themed films have suffered collateral damage: "Team America," which was set to show as a replacement at a handful of theaters, was pulled, and a Steve Carell project in development was shelved.

On late-night shows, Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon, David Letterman, Conan O'Brien and Seth Myers have all poked fairly innocuous fun. Letterman on Friday joked that North Pole emails had been hacked. He displayed one from Blitzen, the reindeer, asking to take Hanukkah off. It was marked with a big red "HACKED" sign.

Kimmel quipped last week that if the North Koreans were going to stop a movie being shown, "Why couldn't it be `Love Actually,' which my wife and her friends have in our living room every Christmas?"

And Fallon chose to lightly lampoon the U.S. government, noting that when Amy Pascal of Sony apologized for some embarrassing emailed jokes involving President Obama, the president replied: "Don't worry. I secretly read those emails months ago."

NYC subways slowly upgrading from 1930s-era technology

NEW YORK (AP)—New York City's subways—the nation's biggest mass transit network—serve more than 6 million daily riders who depend largely on a signal system that dates back to the Great Depression.

Antiquated electro-mechanics with thousands of moving parts are still critical to operations. Dispatchers still monitor most trains from 24-hour underground "towers," and they still put pencil to paper to track their progress.

That eight-decade-old system is slowly being replaced by 21st-century digital technology that allows up to twice as many trains to safely travel closer together. But there's a big caveat: It could take at least 20 years for the city's 700 miles of tracks to be fully computerized.

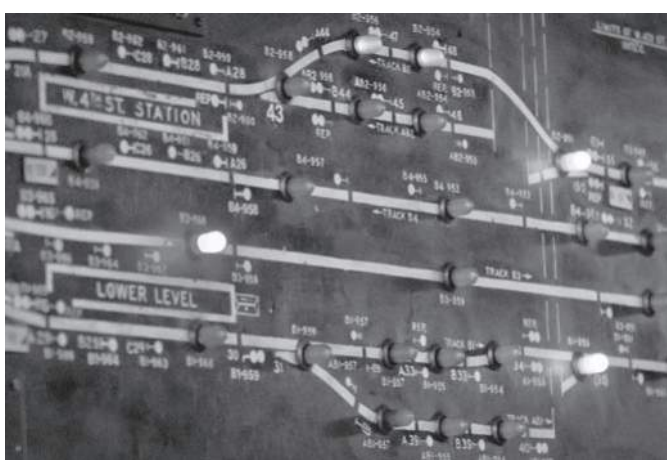
Of the subway system's almost two dozen major lines, just one, the L linking Manhattan and Brooklyn, currently operates on new, computerized, automated signals. And the modernization of the No. 7 line from Manhattan to Queens has begun, to be completed by 2017.

So, for at least the foreseeable future, New York subway riders can expect the snags, weekend shutdowns and overcrowding they have become accustomed to.

"We're at the physical limits of what the original technology can carry," acknowledges Adam Lisberg, spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority that runs the New York City Transit's subways.

But he says safety is not being sacrificed.

"This stuff is old, but it works—it works really well," he says, his voice rising above the roar of a 400-ton train passing through a Greenwich Village station.



AP
In this Dec. 16, 2014 photo, lights on a section of the MTA subway interlocking switch and signal control board shows train locations, at the 4th Street MTA Supervisory Tower in New York.

Much of New York's subways continue to operate with the equipment from the 1930s, kept running by a maintenance team that's forced to fabricate replacement parts long out of production.

Wynton Habersham, the MTA's chief of signals and track operations, recently led an Associated Press reporter and photographer on a walking tour through some of the 22 control "towers"—as the dispatcher spaces are called, though they're buried deep beneath the streets.

In the cramped, worn-out Greenwich Village tower, MTA workers monitor light boards that show train locations and movement. The dispatchers answer phone calls and listen to two-way radio reports while keeping an eye on each train's progress. A massive cabinet is arrayed with levers to move switches through a warren of electrical connections to relays that were cutting-edge technology at the same time as the Hindenburg airship.

Hidden from straphangers, these are the guts of the urban transit network that guide subway traffic through nearly 500 stations.

Behind a door off a platform on Manhattan's West Side at 14th Street is the system's single gleaming, high-tech operation. It allows about two dozen L trains to move each hour in both directions—compared to about 15 with the old mechanics—on a route that takes an average of 37 minutes.

Amid peeling paint, rusty stairs and old-fashioned metal cabinets is a labyrinth of digitalized panels and switches that automatically relay signals in the tunnels, tracing both direction and speed without human help. In case of an emergency, however, the computerized controls can be manually overridden by operators in the cab of each train.

The updating has allowed more cars to be added to the L line, which has become one of the city's most crowded thanks to growth in Brooklyn's hip Williamsburg neighborhood.

It will cost up to $250 million to convert each control tower and link it to tracks and switches. The work is included in the MTA's five-year capital program, which uses city, state and federal money but has a $15 billion funding gap.

Europe has long been ahead of the United States, with several cities including London and Paris operating mass transit rails equipped with updated signals.

"The New York system is big and a finite amount of money was available, for decades," concludes engineer Nabil Ghaly, the MTA's chief signal engineer until he retired in 2007. "We have to catch up."

Happy day: Elton John, David Furnish marry in England

LONDON (AP)—Entertainer Elton John and longtime mate David Furnish officially married Sunday on the ninth anniversary of the day they entered into a civil partnership.

The couple converted their civil bond under new laws implemented in England earlier this year that allow same-sex marriages.

On Sunday the couple posted an Instagram picture of themselves preparing to sign official documents. "That's the legal bit done. Now on to the ceremony!" they wrote.

AP

A Wednesday Dec. 21, 2005 photo from files showing pop star Elton John, right, and his longtime partner David Furnish, after they had a civil ceremony at the Guildhall in Windsor, England.

John and Furnish planned a celebration at their estate near Windsor Castle west of London. An A-list crowd is expected—even if the festivities are likely to be much more sedate than the parties in John's hell-raising rock `n' roll days.

The singer—known for an impressive string of hits dating back decades—promised to post pictures of the festivities to fans around the world.

The nuptials came as no surprise: John had tweeted about his plans earlier in the week, and earlier in the year had praised England for embracing same-sex marriage. He said there had been a remarkable change in a country where homosexual acts had long been deemed criminal offenses.

John said the wedding would be a joyous occasion shared with the couple's two sons, Zachary and Elijah.

The menu was traditional and posh, featuring wild mushroom soup with truffle cream, beef short rib with caramelized onion pie and warm chocolate pudding with vanilla ice cream for dessert, according to a photo of the menu posted by Brooklyn Beckham, son of soccer start David Beckham and designer Victoria Beckham.

The champagne was Laurent-Perrier.

In his post, Brooklyn Beckham offered congratulations to "Uncle Elton and Uncle David."

John said earlier this year that he and Furnish planned to take advantage of the changes to the law, even though they already had a civil bond recognized by the courts.

"We shouldn't just say, `Oh well, we have a civil partnership, we're not going to bother to get married," he said.

John and Furnish met in 1993. Both have been active in a number of charities, with John focusing on efforts to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS.

He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1998 in recognition of his charitable works.

'Hobbit' goes out on top with $90.6 million 5-day debut

NEW YORK (AP)—While Hollywood continued to wrestle with the fallout of the Sony hacking scandal, the weekend box office offered the solace of a moviegoing truism: Hobbits sell.

Peter Jackson's final installment of his six J.R.R. Tolkien adventures, "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies," debuted with $56.2 million over the weekend and $90.6 million since opening Wednesday, according to studio estimates Sunday. For an industry reeling from the cancellation of "The Interview" and terrorist threats against moviegoers, Middle-earth provided reliable refuge.

Aided by popularity on Imax screens, "The Battle of the Five Armies" dominated the pre-Christmas frame with a five-day haul similar to the franchise's previous entry, "The Desolation of Smaug," even if its actual debut weekend was notably less than both prior "Hobbit" movies. In its second week of release overseas, Warner Bros.' "Five Armies" added $105.5 million to bring its two-week global total past $350 million.

Jeff Goldstein, head of domestic distribution for Warner Bros., said the healthy weekend of moviegoing was a welcome respite after an "upsetting and so disturbing" week.

"Not only did we do business in places that I would expect, like the West Coast, we did business everywhere in the country," Goldstein said. "We didn't see that on the prior two `Hobbit's."

Another final installment in a trilogy, "Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb," opened in a distant second place. The Fox comedy, which features Robin Williams' final performance, took in $17.3 million, well off the pace of previous franchise entries. The franchise's previous debut was $54.2 million for 2009's "Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian."

Sony Pictures, which on Wednesday shelved the Dec. 25 release of the North Korea satire "The Interview" following hacker threats of violence against theaters showing the film, unveiled its other holiday option. The studio's "Annie" remake, starring Quvenzhane Wallis as the titular orphan, opened with $16.3 million.

"It was nice shot in the arm," said Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony, who declined to discuss issues related to "The Interview." "We're focused on `Annie,'" he said.

Last week's top film, Ridley Scott's Moses epic, "Exodus: Gods and Kings," tumbled to fourth place with $8.1 million in its second week. The Fox release slid a dramatic 67 percent.

Heading into one of Hollywood's most lucrative weekends of the year, the Christmas box office will be without its top comedy option in "The Interview," directed by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg. The film had been expected to take in about $25-30 million.

With one major release now out of the mix, that will leave more room for the Disney musical "Into the Woods," Angelina Jolie's World War II tale "Unbroken" and "The Hobbit."

"There's a huge opportunity there," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office tracker Rentrak. "There's enough product out there to give it a very satisfying, Christmas holiday leading into the new year. Yeah, we are down one film, but it's a nice mix of films out there."

On Sunday, David Boies, a lawyer for Sony, said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that "The Interview" "will be released." The studio has been criticized by many, including President Barack Obama, for dropping the film following data leaks and intimidations from hackers the FBI has said came from North Korea.

"How it's going to be distributed, I don't think anybody knows quite yet," Boies said.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Where available, the latest international numbers are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. **"The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies,"** $56.2 million ($105.5 million international).
2. **"Night At The Museum: Secret Of The Tomb,"** $17.3 million ($10.8 million international).
3. **"Annie,"** $16.3 million ($1 million international).
4. **"Exodus: Gods and Kings,"** $8.1 million ($7.6 million international).
5. **"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1,"** $7.8 million. ($9.3 million international).
6. **"Wild,"** $4.2 million.
7. **"Top Five,"** $3.6 million.
8. **"Big Hero 6,"** $3.6 million ($11.5 million international).
9. **"Penguins of Madagascar,"** $3.5 million ($16.5 million international).
10. **"P.K.,"** $3.5 million ($22.1 million international).

Good news from Tom Brokaw: His cancer is in remission

NEW YORK (AP)—Tom Brokaw says his cancer is in remission.

The veteran NBC newsman announced Sunday that, after months of chemotherapy, he soon will begin a drug maintenance program.

Sharing with colleagues what he called "very encouraging news," Brokaw's internal memo noted that a year ago his future was "more uncertain than I cared to acknowledge."

Last February, he revealed that six months earlier he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer affecting blood cells in thebone marrow, and was undergoing treatment.

He called the past year "a challenge," but added gratefully he met it in "world-class hospitals with brilliant physicians."

The former NBC "Nightly News" anchor, now a special correspondent, has continued to work on projects during his treatment, including participation in last month's election night coverage. Also in November, he took NBC Sports Network viewers on a trip to his native South Dakota for pheasant hunting season.

Brokaw, 74, began his career with NBC News in its Los Angeles bureau in 1966, later serving as its White House correspondent during the Watergate scandal before becoming anchor in 1983. Brian Williams replaced him as anchor in 2004.

Brokaw is the author of several books including "The Greatest Generation," his celebration of Americans who endured the Great Depression and World War II.

Man on the verge of divorce can't seem to seal the deal

DEAR ABBY: I am three years into a relationship with Harold, a man who is separated but not divorced. We both have grown children. Harold was separated when we got involved. He has since moved in with me and is an active bill-paying member of the home.

I was also separated from a brief marriage when we met, and divorced shortly after we started dating. My assumption was that Harold would also be divorcing. As of now, the paperwork remains partially filled out, but no legal proceedings have begun.

I hate this. I have talked to him about it many times, so he knows my feelings. I'm at the "do it or leave" point, but can't seem to get over the hump. I do not plan on marrying -- I just want him to be divorced. What should I do?

LOOKING FOR LEGALITY IN WASHINGTON

DEAR LOOKING: When you became involved with Harold, did he TELL you he was planning on divorcing his wife? There could be reasons why he hasn't gone through with finalizing it. One of them could be religious; another might be financial. A third, the fear that his relationship with his children -- and grandchildren, if there are any -- will be permanently damaged. Or, that marrying you wasn't his objective in the first place, and your saying you didn't want to remarry made you more attractive to him.

If remarriage isn't your goal, why is his finalizing his divorce so important to you? Before you issue an ultimatum, it's crucial that you understand the answer to this question. After that, you will know what -- or what not -- to do.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have an 11-month-old son. When I was pregnant, I felt I had a great relationship with my mom. She seemed excited about becoming a grandma for the first time, but once my son was born she stayed away for two weeks. When she finally came over, it was only because she happened to be in town for a meeting.

When we met for lunch, she seemed uncomfortable around the baby. I feel hurt that she doesn't seem "into" him or being a grandma. I'm sad she's missing out on so much, but I don't know if I should tell her how I feel. I don't want her to change only because I said something. I'd like her to WANT to visit.

Should I say something to her, or let it be and continue feeling resentment toward her?

DISAPPOINTED NEW MOM

DEAR DISAPPOINTED: Please try to curb your resentment until after you have discussed this with your mother, which is necessary in light of the fact that you have always had a good relationship with her.

In the weeks after your son was born, she may have been trying to give you space and time to bond with your newborn. She may also be busy, or uncomfortable around babies and toddlers who can't yet communicate. Believe it or not, some people—even grandparents -- feel that way, although they are hesitant to admit it.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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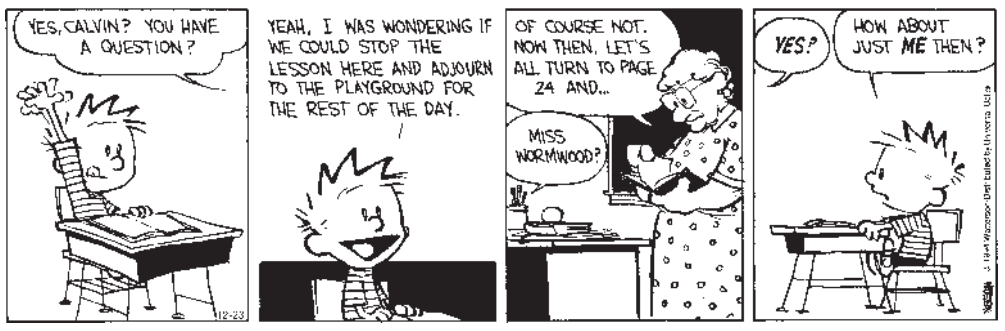
Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

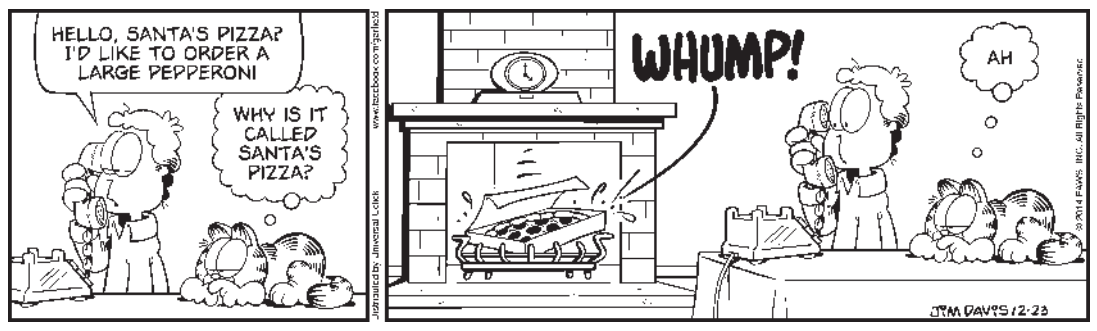
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


YES, CALVIN? YOU HAVE A QUESTION?
YEAH, I WAS WONDERING IF WE COULD STOP THE LESSON HERE AND ADJOURN TO THE PLAYGROUND FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.
OF COURSE NOT. NOW THEN, LET'S ALL TURN TO PAGE 24 AND...
MISS WORMWOOD?
YES?
HOW ABOUT JUST ME THEN?

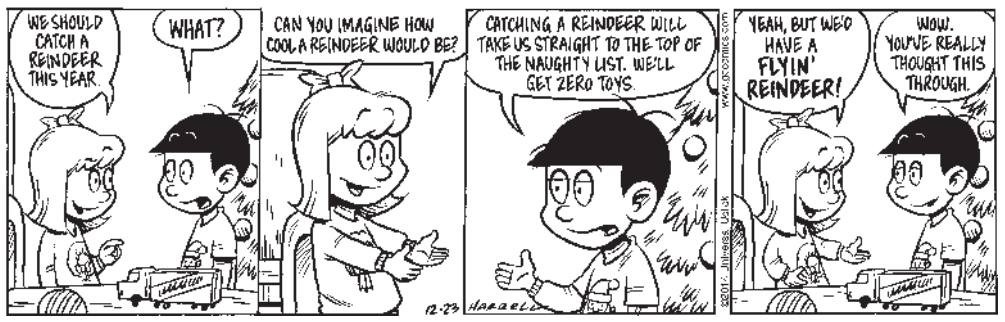
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



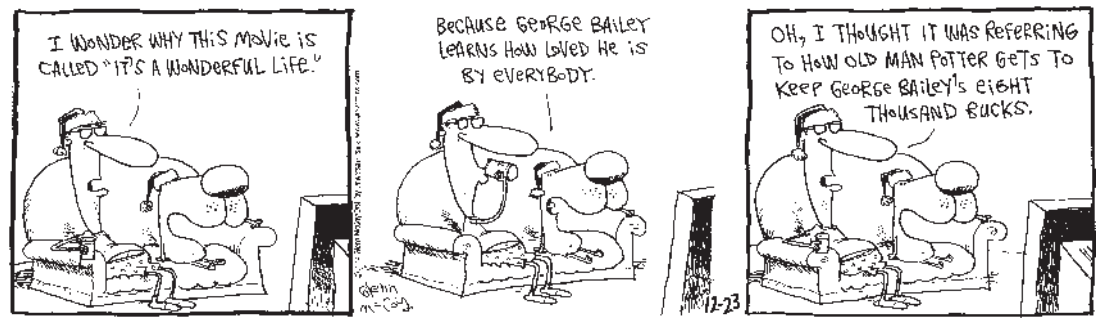
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WE SHOULD CATCH A REINDEER THIS YEAR.
WHAT?
CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW COOL A REINDEER WOULD BE?
CATCHING A REINDEER WILL TAKE US STRAIGHT TO THE TOP OF THE NAUGHTY LIST. WE'LL GET ZERO TOYS.
YEAH, BUT WE'D HAVE A FLYIN' REINDEER!
WOW. YOU'VE REALLY THOUGHT THIS THROUGH.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I WONDER WHY THIS MOVIE IS CALLED "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE."
BECAUSE GEORGE BAILEY LEARNS HOW LOVED HE IS BY EVERYBODY.
OH, I THOUGHT IT WAS REFERRING TO HOW OLD MAN POTTER GETS TO KEEP GEORGE BAILEY'S EIGHT THOUSAND BUCKS.
12-23

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

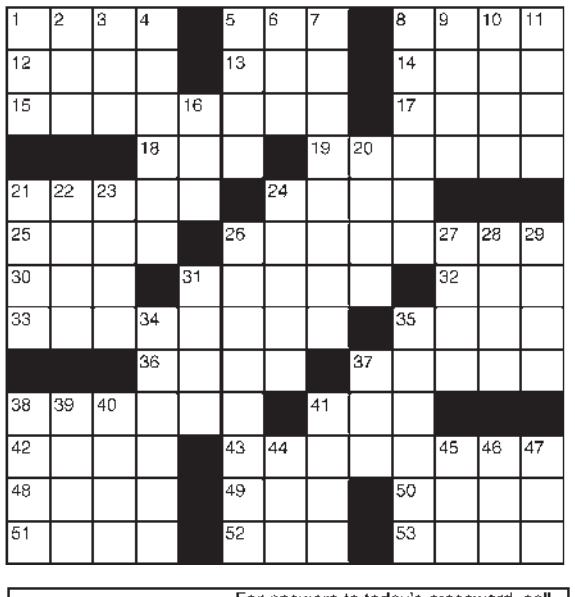
ACROSS
1 Detail, for short
5 Parisian pal
8 Beavers' creations
12 Geometry measure
13 Pale
14 Privy to
15 Become smaller
17 Old portico
18 Unfavorable vote
19 Act of recession
21 Coffee enhancer
24 Actress de Matteo
25 Succor
26 Devise
30 Mrs. McKinley
31 B.B. King's genre
32 Auction action
33 Show a difference
35 Rasp
36 Own
37 "The Age of Anxiety" poet
38 Deli meat
41 Hostel
42 Thing
43 Repentant
48 Finished
49 Robitaille of hockey
50 Caspian feeder
51 Heroic verse
52 Historic time
53 Soft ball?

DOWN
1 Pouch
2 Expert
3 Still, in poetry
4 Forty winks
5 Vacationing
6 PC alternative
7 Surfers' mecca
8 Oust an attorney
9 Con
10 Armstrong's destination
11 Unforeseen problem
16 Aries
20 Wagers
21 Stylish
22 Start over
23 Verve
24 Extinguish
26 Collarbone
27 Footnote abbr.
28 Repulsive
29 Paradise
31 "Dracula" author Stoker
34 View from Windsor Castle
35 5K race, maybe
37 Pismire
38 Faction
39 On
40 Fallon predecessor
41 Erstwhile Peruvian
44 "— Town"
45 Rage
46 Sailor
47 Will Ferrell movie

Solution time: 22 mins.

F	E	W	■	M	A	I	N	E	■	B	L	I
O	R	O	■	E	N	R	O	N	■	R	Y	E
B	R	O	A	D	C	A	S	T	■	O	N	F
■	■	■	M	A	I	■	E	H	H	A	N	D
D	A	B	B	L	E	■	S	A	I	D	■	■
A	C	R	■	S	N	L	■	P	O	L	A	R
W	H	O	A	■	T	A	R	■	T	O	G	A
N	E	A	T	H	■	Y	E	S	■	O	U	T
■	■	D	R	O	P	■	C	H	I	M	F	S
H	A	J	I	■	I	A	■	L	A	I	■	■
L	I	U	■	B	R	O	A	D	S	I	D	E
A	R	M	■	E	E	R	I	E	■	S	U	B
G	Y	P	■	D	E	E	M	S	■	M	O	B

Yesterday's answer 12-23



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18– only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Greg Biffle, 45; Eddie Vedder, 50; Susan Lucci, 68; Harry Shearer, 71.

Happy Birthday: Completing tasks should be your goal, not taking on so much that you are left with loose ends this time next year. This is a time to be precise and self-critical when it comes to what and how you present your identity and what you have to offer. Refuse to let what others do throw you off your game. Your numbers are 10, 16, 21, 23, 34, 37, 41.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Figure out your plan of attack for the upcoming year. Don't let anyone pressure you into something you feel uncertain about. A trip will be filled with surprises. Your emotions will surface, and your personal opinions should not be shared. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't worry so much. Enjoying friends and family or taking part in something that makes you feel good will bring you satisfaction. A love interest will do something special for you. Pay extra attention to someone who spends a lot of time alone. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Go over your finances, legal concerns, end-of-year contracts or anything else that may need your attention. Having everything in order will allow you greater freedom to jump into the new year with an open heart and a fresh outlook. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Take time to remember days gone by. Relax and enjoy the scenery, festivities and good friends. Your genuine concern with providing for others will bring the same in return. An older relative or friend will appreciate your thoughtfulness. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): It's the little things that will help make your festive season that much more memorable. Your generosity will be best shown through your actions, not how much you spend. Keep it simple and within your budget. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Offer to be the one who fetches and picks up odds and ends. Getting out will lead to interesting encounters that can spark your imagination and lead to interesting prospects. You'll discover a very special message that will change your outlook. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Avoid stepping into the spotlight. Someone is likely to criticize what you do or say. Keep busy and get as much done as possible to avoid an argument. A change in the way you feel about someone is likely to unfold. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Do your best to visit people you may not get to see until after the new year begins. A little cheer and socializing will put you in a good mood. Use your imagination when it comes to pleasing someone you love. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Getting back to your roots or sharing memories with someone you don't see often will help you put your life and future in perspective. Let your playful personality take over. Engage in social events that will allow you to shine. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You'll have plenty to contend with when dealing with family, your lover or someone who expects something from you. Don't get emotional, but try to limit anyone demanding more than what you are willing to give. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Facing someone from your past will be difficult. A just and honest approach will help you feel good about the way you handle whatever situation you face. Use your energy to get things done, and don't argue a point you cannot win. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Look at what's going on around you and try to let things unfold naturally. Someone will appreciate your diplomacy and make you an unusual offer. Consider your options, but don't be too quick to make a commitment. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are outgoing, aggressive and shrewd. You are driven by success.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		6				9	7	
1				2				
8			3		5			1
		5	4		3	1		
	6						9	
		8	6		7	5		
6			8		2			7
				4				5
	8	3				6		

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	7	2	3	1	6	9	5	8
8	1	5	4	7	9	3	6	2
6	9	3	8	2	5	7	4	1
7	2	4	6	3	8	5	1	9
3	5	8	2	9	1	4	7	6
9	6	1	7	5	4	2	8	3
1	8	7	9	4	2	6	3	5
5	3	9	1	6	7	8	2	4
2	4	6	5	8	3	1	9	7

Difficulty Level ★ 12/22

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE ROMAN FESTIVAL OF POMONA **Solution: 7 letters**

S	A	S	L	O	B	M	Y	S	S	T	I	U	R	F
T	P	P	R	I	E	S	T	S	G	R	O	W	L	L
U	P	S	G	G	B	I	T	E	N	O	T	O	D	A
N	L	E	F	N	R	O	V	I	D	S	V	O	D	M
N	E	E	W	I	N	E	A	E	U	E	Y	D	T	E
O	S	D	P	T	R	H	S	G	A	T	R	S	H	N
I	D	S	R	S	M	E	U	I	I	A	A	Ⓗ	G	V
T	E	E	D	A	R	A	P	L	H	E	Ⓣ	K	I	E
A	R	T	S	O	G	O	I	C	F	Ⓨ	R	S	N	R
V	E	S	S	R	C	T	R	O	Ⓜ	A	N	C	E	T
I	U	E	M	U	R	O	M	O	P	A	R	T	Y	U
T	Q	V	N	E	C	E	L	T	I	C	E	K	A	M
L	N	R	F	M	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	R	S	N
U	O	A	D	O	O	F	P	R	O	T	E	C	T	U
C	C	H	T	R	E	E	S	I	L	V	A	N	U	S

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Apples, August, Bite, Celtic, Conquered, Cornucopia, Cultivation, Feast, Fertility, Fire, Flamen, Food, Fruits, Garden, Grow, Harvest, Love, Make, Myth, Night, Nuts, Orchard, Ovid, Parade, Park, Party, Picus, Pomorum, Priests, Protect, Roasting, Romance, Rome, Samhain, Seeds, Silvanus, Spirits, Symbols, Trees, Vertumnus, Villagers, Wine, Wood

Yesterday's Answer: Sanitizer

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WHATZIT Solution: Hopscotch

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ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

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Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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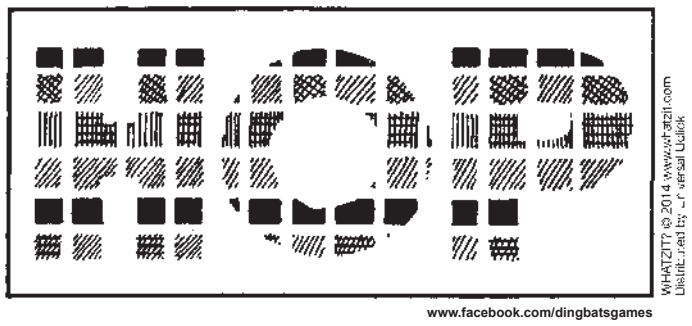
Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



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Find today's solution in classified section

Romo, Cowboys reach playoffs in rout of Colts

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo (9) hands off the ball to running back DeMarco Murray (29) during the first half of an NFL football game against the Indianapolis Colts, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014, in Arlington, Texas.

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)— Dallas ended a four-year playoff drought Sunday in a dominating 42-7 victory over the Indianapolis Colts, with Tony Romo throwing four touchdown passes and breaking Troy Aikman's franchise record for yards passing.

The Cowboys (11-4) emphatically ended a three-game home losing streak, scoring touchdowns on their first four possessions.

Dallas had an opening for its first NFC East title and postseason berth since 2009, and first under coach Jason Garrett, because of Philadelphia's 27-24 loss at Washington on Saturday. The Eagles were eliminated with the Cowboys' win.

The Colts (10-5) didn't have much to play for with the AFC South title secured, and looked like it while barely avoiding their first shutout loss in 21 years.

The Cowboys had already ended their three-year rut of 8-8 finishes that included losses in finales that kept them out of the playoffs. But they had to keep winning to make sure they got in.

NFL rushing leader DeMarco Murray played with a broken left hand, but the Cowboys didn't need much from him. He finished with 58 yards, with a 1-yard score.

Seahawks 35, Cardinals 6

In Glendale, Russell Wilson threw for two touchdowns and ran for another, as Seattle set a franchise record with 596 yards of offense and the streaking Seahawks closed in on another NFC West title.

Seattle (11-4) moved into a tie with Arizona (11-4) for first in the NFC West and the Seahawks hold the tiebreaker by virtue of two wins over the Cardinals. Both already have clinched playoff berths.

Wilson had the longest run of his career (55 yards) and matched the longest pass of his career (80) in the Seahawks' fifth straight victory.

Marshawn Lynch sat out the first quarter with what the team called an "upset stomach," then came in to score on a 6-yard run in the second quarter and a spectacular, multiple tackle-breaking 79-yarder in Seattle's 21-point fourth quarter.

Steelers 20, Chiefs 12

In Pittsburgh, Ben Roethlisberger passed for 220 yards and a touchdown, Le'Veon Bell added a score and the Steelers locked up a postseason berth.

Pittsburgh (10-5) faces Cincinnati next week for the AFC North title. Either way, the Steelers will be playing January football for the first time since Tim Tebow and Denver stunned the defending AFC champions in the wild-card round three years ago.

Antonio Brown caught seven passes and a touchdown for Pittsburgh, which has won seven of nine.

Kansas City's Alex Smith passed for a season-high 311 yards but was sacked six times. The Chiefs (8-7) have lost four of five and need to beat San Diego next Sunday and receive plenty of help to make it back to the playoffs for a second straight year under coach Andy Reid.

Falcons 30, Saints 14

In New Orleans, Julio Jones returned from a hip injury to catch seven passes for 107 yards, and the Falcons remained in playoff contention.

Matt Ryan completed 30 of 40, passed for 322 yards and a touchdown, and Devonta Freeman ran for a 31-yard score for Atlanta (6-9), which can win the NFC South by beating Carolina next week.

The Saints (6-9), who committed three turnovers in the fourth quarter, lost their fifth straight at home and were eliminated.

Jimmy Graham fumbled inside the Atlanta 1-yard line early in the fourth quarter. The Saints had a chance to drive for a winning score inside the final three minutes, but Robert McClain's interception of Drew Brees in Saints territory set up a field goal, and Osi Umenyiora returned Brees' fumble for an 86-yard TD as time expired.

Panthers 17, Browns 13

In Charlotte, Cam Newton threw for one touchdown and ran for another as Carolina (6-8-1) took over sole possession of first place in the NFC South. The victory sets up the winner-take-all showdown next Sunday at Atlanta.

The winner will join the 2010 Seattle Seahawks as the only teams in NFL history to reach the postseason in a non-strike-shortened season with a losing record.

Newton threw for 201 yards and ran for 63 yards just 12 days after the quarterback suffered two fractures in his lower back following an automobile accident. Jonathan Stewart ran for 122 yards and caught a 9-yard touchdown pass from Newton.

Johnny Manziel made his second NFL start for Cleveland (7-8) but left with 1:49 remaining in the first half with a hamstring injury and did not return.

Packers 20, Buccaneers 3

In Tampa Bay, Aaron Rodgers threw for 318 yards and one touchdown to help the Packers clinch a wild-card playoff berth.

Eddie Lacy scored on a 44-yard run, Jordy Nelson caught a 1-yard TD pass in the fourth quarter and had nine receptions for 113 yards, while Randall Cobb finished with 11 catches for 131 yards.

A 21-13 loss to Buffalo a week ago cost Green Bay (11-4) sole possession of first place in the division. It also hurt its chances for earning home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs. Green Bay closes the regular season at home against Detroit, and a victory will give the Packers another NFC North crown.

The Bucs (2-13) have lost five straight and remain in contention for the first overall pick in the 2015 draft.

Patriots 17, Jets 16

In East Rutherford, Jonas Gray scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 1-yard run early in the fourth quarter after the Patriots intercepted Geno Smith, and New England clinched a first-round playoff bye.

Tom Brady threw a 3-yard TD pass to Rob Gronkowski for the Patriots (12-3), who could earn home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs if Denver loses at Cincinnati on Monday night.

With the Jets (3-12) leading 13-10 late in the third quarter, Smith's pass for Jace Amaro hung in the air for an easy interception by Jamie Collins — and led to Gray's score minutes later.

Nick Folk's 52-yard field goal attempt could have given New York a lead with just over five minutes left, but it appeared to be partially blocked and fell short. Brady and the Patriots then ran out the clock.

Lions 20, Bears 14

In Chicago, Joique Bell scored the go-ahead touchdown on a sweet run in the fourth quarter, and Ndamukong Suh had two sacks.

Calvin Johnson added six catches for 103 yards for Detroit (11-4), which came away with a narrow victory over a struggling team after locking up its second trip to the postseason in 15 years. The Bears (5-10) benched quarterback Jay Cutler this week in favor of the undistinguished Jimmy Clausen.

The Lions secured a playoff spot with Philadelphia's loss to Washington on Saturday. They were hoping to lock up their first division championship since 1993. But because the Packers beat Tampa Bay, the NFC North race will come down to next week's game at Green Bay.

Matthew Stafford overcame two interceptions and completed 22 of 39 passes for 243 yards. He hit the 4,000-yard mark for the fourth straight year.

Texans 25, Ravens 13

In Houston, Running back Arian Foster threw a touchdown pass, Randy Bullock made a franchise-record six field goals and Houston's defense dominated to keep its slim playoff hopes alive.

The Ravens (9-6) now need some help next week to get into the postseason after Joe Flacco threw a season-high three interceptions and the offense struggled all day.

Houston (8-7) remains in the hunt with the victory, but needs several teams to lose next week.

With three quarterbacks hurt, the Texans started Case Keenum, who got his first win in nine NFL starts.

Foster ran for 96 yards. But his highlight came when he took a pitch from Keenum and, with a defender in his face, threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to C.J. Fiedorowicz to make it 16-0 in the second quarter.

Raiders 26, Bills 24

In Oakland, Derek Carr threw two touchdown passes and Sebastian Janikowski kicked four field goals to help the Raiders knock the Bills from playoff contention.

The Bills (8-7) needed to win their final two games and get some help to end the NFL's longest active playoff drought at 14 seasons. But they failed at the easiest part, beating the lowly Raiders (3-12), and will miss the playoffs for a 15th straight season.

Oakland has the second-longest active postseason drought at 12 years but has done a good job of playing spoiler in recent weeks, beating Kansas City, San Francisco and Buffalo the past five weeks.

Dolphins 37, Vikings 35

In Miami Gardens, Dolphins owner Stephen Ross, buoyed by a thrilling comeback win, said Joe Philbin will return as coach next season.

Ross made his announcement in the locker room shortly after the Dolphins won on a safety.

Rookie Terrence Fede blocked a punt for a safety with 41 seconds left, and Ryan Tannehill threw four touchdown passes. The Dolphins overcame a 14-0 deficit to take the lead, but trailed again after giving up 15 points in an 11-second span in the fourth quarter.

Philbin's job had been considered in jeopardy because the Dolphins will miss the playoffs for the sixth year in a row. But they're 8-7 and have a shot at a winning season if not the playoffs.

Minnesota fell to 6-9.

Rams 37, Giants 27

In St. Louis, Odell Beckham Jr. caught two touchdown passes and rolled up 148 yards receiving against a defense that hadn't allowed a TD in three straight games.

Beckham set a franchise rookie record with his 10th and 11th TD catches, shattered another rookie mark for receptions and topped 1,000 yards while shrugging off a pair of late hits in the second quarter. The second led to a brawl and three ejections, none of them to starters.

The Giants (6-9) had a season-best 514 yards in total offense and have won three in a row heading into their finale at home against the Eagles. They had lost seven straight before the current streak started.

Kenny Britt made nine catches for 103 yards and Tre Mason had 13 carries for 76 yards and a score for the Rams (6-9).

LeBron scores 25 as Cavs tame Grizzlies

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James (23) drives between Memphis Grizzlies' Courtney Lee (5) and Tayshaun Prince (21) in the first quarter of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014, in Cleveland.

CLEVELAND (AP)—LeBron James and Kyrie Irving stepped aside and let one of their teammates polish off an opponent.

On Sunday, Dion Waiters finished Memphis.

Waiters scored 13 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter as the Cleveland Cavaliers handled one of the Western Conference's best teams, beating the short-handed Grizzlies 105-91.

The Cavs have been waiting for the enigmatic and inconsistent Waiters to become more reliable. It's still a work in progress but Waiters, who has frequently been mentioned in trade rumors over the past two seasons, is showing signs of developing into a steady scorer off the bench.

"He's learning every day," said James, who had 25 points and 11 assists. "He's a young guy. He hasn't experienced much in this league, so for him to have a game like he had, we needed it."

James scored 16 in the second half and the Cavs shot a season-best 61 percent from the field to improve to just 3-6 against West teams. Anderson Varejao scored 18 and Irving had 17 points and 12 assists for the Cavs, who are 11-3 since their sluggish 5-7 start.

Marc Gasol scored 23 and added 11 rebounds for the Grizzlies, who played without forward Zach Randolph. He's nursing a sore and swollen right knee he injured in Friday's loss at Chicago.

Jon Leuer added 16 points for Memphis, which dropped to 21-6.

Gasol refused to use Randolph's absence as an excuse.

"We play who we have," he said. "Whoever's not here is not here. Trust me, we have enough talent in this locker room not just to win tonight but to win the same amount of games we've won so far."

Despite not having Randolph, their leading rebounder, Grizzlies were still within 79-74 when the Cavs went on an 8-0 run to take control. Irving triggered the spurt with a basket before Waiters, who was benched in the second half of a win over Brooklyn on Friday, fed James for an alley-oop dunk. Waiters then drained a 3-pointer to cap an 11-3 run, and the backup guard scored eight consecutive points to push Cleveland's lead to 100-83.

Waiters scored 11 points in a span of 2:10, assuming the closer role usually played by James and Irving.

"When it's not one of those guys nights, somebody's got to step up and my approach every game is to be locked in as far as being consistent and being aggressive at all times, that's just who I am," Waiters said. "I just try to let the game come to me now. I just take what they give me."

Kings 108, Lakers 101

In Sacramento, DeMarcus Cousins had 29 points and 14 rebounds in his second start since returning from a serious illness, and Sacramento beat Los Angeles to snap a five-game losing streak. Rudy Gay scored 24 points, and Ben McLemore added 23 points and eight rebounds to help the Kings pull away late. Sacramento had lost 10 of 12 games—going 2-8 while Cousins recovered from viral meningitis—and fired coach Michael Malone last week.

Tyrone Corbin won for the first time in three games as Sacramento's interim coach.

Nick Young scored 26 points, and Kobe Bryant had 25 for the Lakers, who have lost six of eight. Bryant shot just 8 of 30 and had five rebounds and three assists.

Pelicans 101, Thunder 99

In Oklahoma City, Anthony Davis scored 38 points to lead New Orleans past Oklahoma City.

It was the third-highest point total of Davis' career. He made 16 of 22 shots and had 12 rebounds.

Jrue Holiday had 11 points and matched a career high with 15 assists for the Pelicans.

Russell Westbrook scored 29 points for the Thunder, but he missed a 3-pointer that could have given Oklahoma City the lead in the closing seconds. Reggie Jackson added 19 points.

Oklahoma City forward Kevin Durant missed his second straight game because of a sprained right ankle.

Suns 104, Wizards 92

In Washington, Eric Bledsoe and Markieff Morris each scored 17 points, Goran Dragic added 16 and Phoenix beat Washington to end the Wizards' winning streak at six.

The Suns finished 3-0 on their trip after losing six in a row. They opened the road swing in Charlotte on Wednesday night and beat New York on Saturday.

Rasual Butler led the Wizards with 17 points, and Kevin Seraphin had a season-high 16.

Washington cut it to 95-89 on Paul Pierce's layup with 2:40 to play, but the Suns scored nine straight—seven by Bledsoe—to take a 104-89 lead with 1:01 to play.

Raptors 118, Knicks 108

In Toronto, Lou Williams and Kyle Lowry each scored 22 points, and Toronto Raptors beat New York for its sixth consecutive win.

Greivis Vasquez had 21 points and Terrence Ross added 18 for the Raptors, who never trailed in matching their longest winning streak of the season. Toronto also won six straight from Nov. 15-26.

Carmelo Anthony scored 28 points for New York. The Knicks lost their fifth straight and have dropped 15 of 16 overall. New York fell to 2-13 on the road and 1-6 in the second game of back-to-backs.

Heat 100, Celtics 84

In Miami, Luol Deng had 23 points, James Ennis scored 10 of his 16 in the fourth quarter and Miami beat Boston end five-game home losing streak.

It was the first time in 154 games that Miami didn't have any of its former Big Three—Dwyane Wade, Chris Bosh or LeBron James. Wade sat with a bruised right knee, Bosh missed his fifth straight game with a left calf strain and James now plays for Cleveland.

Tyler Zeller scored 22 points for Boston, which had won three straight.

Pacers 100, Timberwolves 96

In Minneapolis, C.J. Miles scored 28 points and David West bulled his way to the basket for two big points with 34 seconds to play to help Indiana hold off Minnesota.

Miles hit 10 of 18 shots and Roy Hibbert had 15 points, eight rebounds and four blocks for the Pacers, who got 48 points from their bench. They shot a season-high 50 percent from the field on the second night of a back-to-back and forced 16 turnovers to win for just the second time this month.

Mo Williams had 24 points and 10 assists for the Timberwolves.

Sixers 96, Magic 88

In Orlando, Michael Carter-Williams scored 21 points and Philadelphia rallied in the second half to beat Orlando for its third victory of the season.

The 76ers ended a five-game losing streak. All three of their victories have come on the road.

Victor Oladipo had 23 points for the Magic.

Nets 110, Pistons 105

In New York, Mason Plumlee scored 10 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and had 12 rebounds in Brooklyn's victory over Detroit.

Joe Johnson added 16 points, including four free throws in the final 12 seconds. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 20 points for Detroit, and Andre Drummond finished with 18 points and 20 rebounds.

SIDEBAR

Kobe may take time off

SACRAMENTO (AP)—A sore and struggling Kobe Bryant is considering taking some time off to rest.

"I don't have much of a choice if the body is feeling the way it's feeling right now," Bryant said. "You got to be smart. You got to make sure you get enough return on your investment. With the amount of work that I do and put into my body and to get my body ready, for it to be sore as it is right now, sometimes you do have to consider sitting down.

Los Angeles Lakers coach Byron Scott said he would talk to Bryant about taking off one or two games or lowering his minutes after he looked fatigued while struggling in a 108-101 loss to the Sacramento Kings on Sunday night. Bryant missed 22 of 30 shots from the field and had nine turnovers in nearly 38 minutes against the Kings. The Lakers next play the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday before going on the road to play the Chicago Bulls on Christmas and the Dallas Mavericks on Friday. Bryant said he was uncertain what games were best for him to take off.

"You got to look at the body," Bryant said. "You make the call tomorrow and see how my body feels and go from there."

When asked if Bryant's offensive struggles were due to fatigue or being aggressive offensively, Scott said: "That's fatigue. I think that goes hand in hand. I'm going to think about it tonight and sit down with Kobe tomorrow and we'll talk about it. We'll come up with a solution and try to figure out the next few games and what we want to do."

Bryant is averaging 24.6 points on 37.7 shooting from the field in 35.2 minutes per game this season. The NBA's third all-time leading scorer hasn't shot under 40 percent in his previous 18 seasons. Bryant has played in all 27 games this season after being limited to a career-low six games last season due to knee and Achilles injuries.

"I'm trying to shoulder a lot," Bryant said. "I'm trying to figure out the puzzle of my body and getting it to respond so I can come through."

On the remedy, Bryant said: "I don't know. I'm still trying to figure it out. This is uncharted territory."

So whom should the Lakers turn to offensively if Bryant is out? Guard Nick Young, who is averaging 14.9 points, says he is up to the challenge.

"Just give me the ball. I'm always ready to carry the load," Young said.

The Lakers (8-19) have lost three straight games after winning the previous three. One long-time NBA scout in attendance Sunday claimed "Kobe shoots too much" and that the Lakers are "unbearable to watch" in their current state.

Dream Team lead winners in cage opener

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Dream Team and two other squads won their debut games in the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic last Friday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Dream Team played in the curtain raiser after the traditional parade of teams that highlighted the opening ceremony and routed Rollers 3 in the boys U19 pairing, 84-50. In the last two games, Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan and Rollers 2 also came out victorious.

Four Dream Team players broke into double figures to lift their squad to the easy win. Dixon Kwon led the way with his 16 points, while John Darag added 14, and Ignacio Borja and Wilfredo Francisco contributed 10 apiece.

Dream Team had the game in the bag right at the end of the first half as it enjoyed a 42-16 advantage. Dream Team pulled away early, 15-1, as it held Rollers 3 without a field goal in the first five minutes and change of the game. Rollers A scored its lone point at the 14:24 mark the 20-minute first half off Jude Tengco's split charity.

In the other boys U19 game, Rollers 2 barged into the win column after downing Sun Palace, 53-41, in the third game in the opening day.

Rollers 2 used a balance scoring to take the 12-point victory against Sun Place. Jun Alipio paced the Rollers 2 with his 10 points, while Jethro Cruz and Dalton Dancoe combined for 17. Five other Rollers 2 players chipped in at least 3 points each.

Ethan Manalili had 11 markers in Sun Palace' loss and was held to one field goal in the second half.

In the lone women's open division match, Fiesta Resort also notched a double-digit winning margin against Sun Palace, 40-30.

Friendly Joy Pena engaged in a shootout with Sun Palace's Marlene Lumabi and matched the latter's game-high 17 points to lift Fiesta to victory. Lian Reyes backed up Pena, adding 10 points.

Pena dropped 11 of her total markers in the first half to give Fiesta a 20-11 advantage. Her other teammates stepped up in the second half, allowing Fiesta to keep its safe distance against Sun Palace.

First Game

Dream Team 84–Kwon 16, Darag 15, Borja 10, Francisco 10, Borja 9, Castro 9, De Leon Guerrero 7.

Rollers 3 50–Factor 14, Ogumoro 14 13, Tengco 7, Dela Cruz 3, Alonzo 2, Arceo 2, Cruz, 2 Bordon 2, Yu 1.

Scoring by halves: 42-16, 80-50.

Second Game

Fiesta Resort 40–Pena 17, Reyes 10, Francisco 7, Lee 4, Bergosa 3.

Sun Palace 30–Lumabi 17, Abadilla 6, Francisco 4, Cardino 2, Villanueva 1.

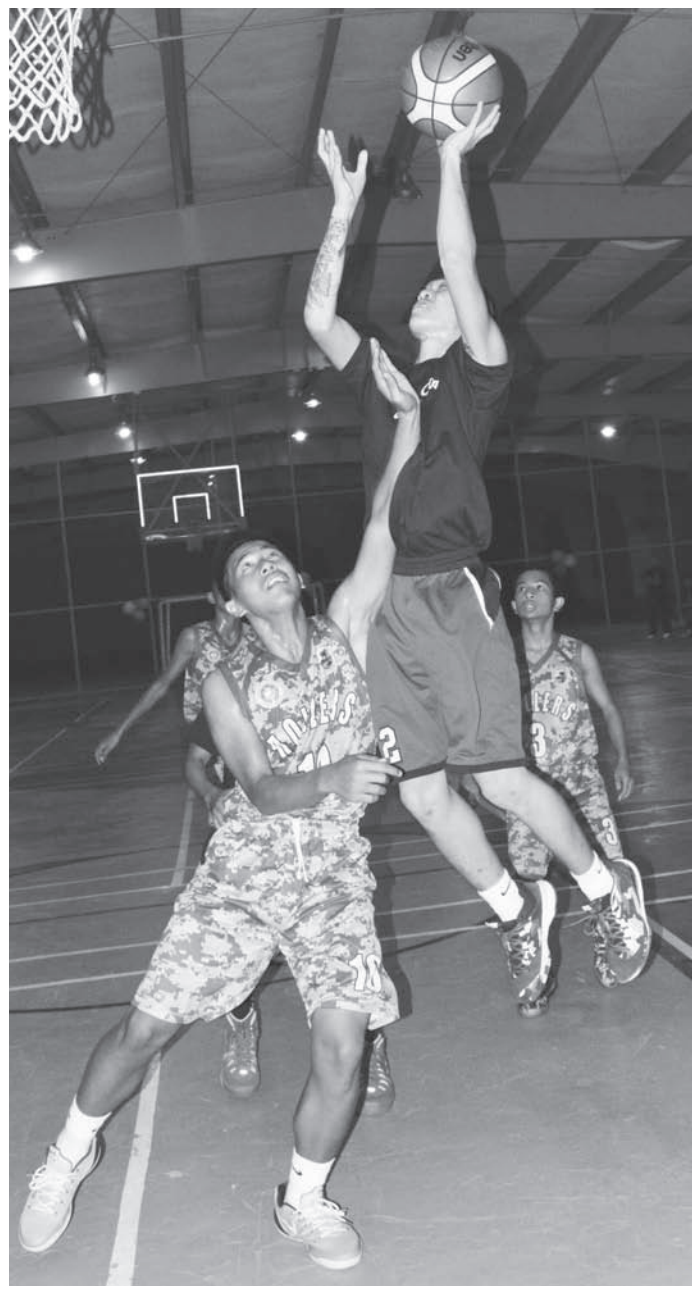
Scoring by halves: 20-11, 40-30.

Third Game

Rollers 2 53–Alipio 10, Cruz 9, Dancoe 8, Deocares 5, Rios 5, Babauta 4, Santos 3, Abobo 3, Ellama 2.

Sun Palace 41–Manalili 11, Omengkar 8, Pangelinan 5, Capuyon 4, Benavente 3, Gabaldon 3, Ocaya 2, Pamintuan 1.

Scoring by halves: 30-24, 53-41.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Dream Team's Dixon Kwon goes high up for a shot against the Rollers 3's Joel Subang during the first quarter of their game in the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic last Friday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Crazy 8 stands in Voyagers' way to title win

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Jonny's Crazy 8 is the only team standing on Jokers IT&E Voyagers' way to the title victory in the Budweiser Cup Tuesday 8-Ball Billiards League, which ends tonight at Jonny's Bar in Garapan.

The Crazy 8 will be hosting the Voyagers, the regular season champions, as both teams clinched the finals berths after dispatching their respective semis opponents in last week's matches held at various bars on Saipan.

The Voyagers pulled off a 9-6 win over sister team Jokers Str8 Shooters, while the Crazy 8 edged Smoke Pub Sang&D'Gang, 9-7, in a pair of Final Four race-to-9 contests.

Mark Butac sealed the win for the Voyagers after beating Chester Cuento in the singles 8-ball event.

Nolan Cultura kept the Str8 Shooters in the match when he defeated the Voyagers' Brian Nelvis to move within two, 6-8, but that proved to be their final stand as luck sided with Butac in his match-up with Cuento.

In the Crazy 8-Sang&D'Gang match, Rey Pinangay gave the Jonny's crew the victory when he defeated Tom Muna.

The Smoke Pub-backed squad threatened at 7-8 after Fuanny Kelulau's conquering of Warlee Ellama, but Muna could not force a rubber match as he succumbed to Pinangay in the next match.

The Voyagers scored a 9-8 upset win over the top-ranked Saipan TV Hustlers to clinch a semis berth.

Jokers IT&E finished second to Saipan TV after the elimination round with the Voyagers compiling a 150-75 slate against the Hustlers' 151-74 slate.

The Voyagers defeated the Hustlers in the regular season finals with Butac, Brian Nelvis, and R.J. Mascarinas delivering the wins in the race-to-9 contest, while the Shooters earned third place honors after beating Jonny's Crazy 8.

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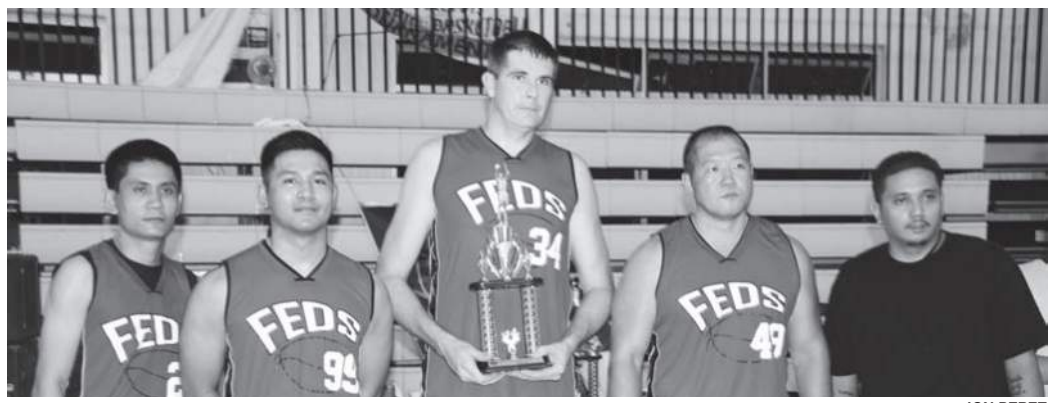
with his 30-point per game average and Tim Wesley notching the top shot blocker award after norming 6 every match.

Northern Marianas Sports Association veteran court general Elias Rangamar rounded out the individual awardees as he was the league's top passer, issuing 5 assists per game.

In the team awards, the Feds won the pennant after a league-best 6-1 record with the Frank Flores-coached squad's only loss coming from DCCA, 71-65, on Oct. 20, snapping the team's three-game winning run.

Commonwealth Health Center, which dropped its first 6 games before scoring a breakthrough 62-57 win over the Department of Public Safety on Nov. 5, was awarded the sportsmanship trophy.



JON PEREZ

From left, the Feds' Ronnel Gamboa, Leo Apelo, Ken McCain, Haejoon Park, and Juan Camacho, pose for a photo after receiving the runner-up trophy in the 2014 IT&E-DYS Inter-government Basketball League last Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

NMSA took the perpetual trophy after beating the Feds in overtime in Game 1 of the finals, 79-75. NMSA swept all of its three matches in the double-elimination playoffs to clinch the first finals berth and the twice-to-beat edge that went with it, while the Feds trashed DCCA in the other semis game, 84-49.

The NMSA Spartans, thanks to the hot shooting of Preston Basa—not Ben Jones as earlier reported—and Ezra Caro's end-game heroics, completed a come-from-behind win over the Feds in the title match after falling behind by 9 points in the last 2:11 of the regulation.

Basa led NMSA with his 22 points behind five 3-pointers, while Caro tallied 10 points, 2 assists, 3 rebounds, and 2 steals. Apelo paced the Feds with 24 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, and 7 steals, while Gamboa backed him up with 22 and McCain tallied 13 points, 12 rebounds, and 2 assists and blocked 4 shots.

MP

From Page 28

es to wrap the game in overtime, but it could not capitalize on these breaks. The closest the squad could get was when Zhi Pheng Lin attempted a shot in the second 10-minute overtime, but the ball hit the cross bar.

With the missed opportunities in regulation and two extended periods, MP United had to challenge the then unbeaten Inter Godfather's to a shootout.

Inter attempted first with young gun Ryu Tanzawa scoring a quick shot against MP United goalkeeper Chris Aninzo. John Diego Masga also hit his mark, thanks to Evan Hunsberger's butterfingers. The Inter Godfather's goalie dove for the save and had a hand on the ball when he fell on the ground, but eventually lost it, allowing Masga to even up the count.

Ropati Tonuu made the second attempt for Inter Godfather's, but his shot was way over the center post, while Hunsberger redeemed himself from an earlier fumble when he caught the ball off Joyner's kick to keep the deadlock. A Nigel Leahy conversion broke the standoff, but Yobech tied it anew.

Next up for Inter Godfather's was Suguru Takahashi and he faltered, as his shot way wide to the left (goalie's right), while Mercado knocked the ball in on the other side to give MP United the upper hand. Shunji Nagayasu drilled the last shot for Inter Godfather's to force another standoff and put Miller in the spotlight.

Miller, who made repeated attempts to score in regulation and in the two overtimes but had no success with the ball mostly going over the post, delivered this time as he converted a left top corner shot to hand MP United the Cup.

MP United clinched the Cup by winning all three games in the tournament. In first defeated Paire Football Club, 3-0, and then stunned the second-running Wild Bill's in the semis, 3-0, before another upset in the finale against the Division 1 leader Inter Godfather's.

Asked what helped MP United win the Cup against the two-highest seeded teams, Del Rosario pointed to the presence of young players on their roster and their understanding of their role on the squad.

"We've been playing good football this season as we have players who may be young, but understand well their role on the team. Our young players can create problems to older teams as we use their speed and non-stop ball passing to create scoring opportunities," Del Rosario said.

ENRICO

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during his visit. The program is great in both the athletic and academic aspects, " the older Del Rosario said. "The team is like a family which is what he is used to with MP United."

The Mount Carmel School senior will be playing collegiate soccer after years of honing his skills in the sport. He started playing soccer when he was just 8 years old.

"Soccer has been good to me over the years and I'm capitalizing on that opportunity to get a good education," Enrico told *Saipan Tribune*.

Enrico plans to pursue a degree in sports science while playing for the Division 2 school.

"From professional athletes to personal fitness sector, we always look for ways to increase sports performance, raise levels of physical fitness, and reduce risk of injury or speed up recovery. I believe that this degree will be in demand as well as beneficial for me in the future," he said.

As part of the requirements of his contract with Alderson, Enrico, who is still in the U.S., said he needs to attain and maintain a certain G.P.A to continue playing. He will be back on island on New Year's Eve and after spending the holidays with his family, he will resume training for future competitions. He usually spends a few hours every day working out and is at the soccer field three times a week, working on his touches and passes with his teammates.

2014 SSC Jingle Bell Fun Run

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Participants in last week's 2014 Saipan Swim Club's Jingle Bell Fun Run pose for a photo before the start of the race at the Minatchom Atdao pavilion.

Saipan Swim Club coach Jacoby Winkfield gives instructions to runners before the start of the race.

Runners head out to the course.

The last wave of runners heads up north.

Wataru Kadokura keeps his pace as he goes for a strong finish in the 4.5-kilometer race.

From left, Christian Villacrusis, Kento Akimaru, and David Boyer slow down as they near the finish line.

R.J. Pierce takes long steps as he nears the finish line.

Saipan Swim Club coach Jacoby Winkfield, left, and two club volunteers wait for the finishers.

Taiga Sato, left, and Rinto Takahashi run together as they near the finish line.

Romo, Cowboys reach playoffs in rout of Colts

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

LeBron scores 25 as Cavs tame Grizzlies

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MP United Football Club and Inter Godfather's players exchange high-fives before starting their game for the M-League Cup last Sunday night at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

MP United wins M-League Cup

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MP United Football Club took the M-League Cup after nosing out Inter Godfather's in a penalty shootout, 4-3, last Sunday night at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

John Diego Masga, Jireh Yobech, Raymond Mercado, and Joe Miller scored for MP United in the shootout. Jehn Joyner had the lone miss for the club in the shootout but his goal late in the second half extended the game, which went into two overtimes before the Norman Del Rosario-mentored squad finally ended the tight match in the shootout.

Joyner drilled the equalizer in the 79th minute off a scramble inside the box after Joe Miller's free kick went short. Joyner battled for the ball against three other Inter Godfather's players and won with the MP United forward converting a full volley shot.

Earlier in the first half, Semisi Betevua put Inter Godfather's on the board with his 21st minute goal.

Despite falling behind in the first half, Del Rosario said his players kept their composure and patiently waited for their turn to score.

"During the halftime break, I told the boys that we've been to this kind of situation a lot of times and like what we did in the past, we just need to shake it off and focus on the game plan, which was to create a build up and patiently wait for the right time to attack and go for a goal," Del Rosario said.

The right time came past the halfway mark of the second half with Joyner seeing daylight as he knocked the ball in after multiple players fought for possession in the box. After Joyner evened up the match, MP United had many chanc-

See MP on Page 26

Consolation for Feds' Gamboa, McCain

JON PEREZ

The Feds' Ronnel Gamboa, left, is guarded by Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Tim Wesley in their semifinal match in the 2014 IT&E-DYS Inter-government Basketball League last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Gamboa was named the regular season Most Valuable Player and earned the best in steals award serving as consolation to the Feds after it lost to NMSA in the finals.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Feds' do-it-all guard Ronnel Gamboa and big man Ken McCain earned some consolation after clinching individual awards in the 2014 IT&E-DYS Inter-government Basketball League last Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Gamboa, the other half of the Feds' 1-2 scoring duo that includes Leo Apelo, earned the regular season Most Valuable Player honors and was named the best player with the quickest hands as he averaged five steals per game.

McCain was the league's top rebounder as the Feds' center, towering at 6'9", plucked 15 per contest.

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs also had two players getting individual awards with Edgar Pangelinan named as scoring champ

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Enrico verbally commits to Division 2 school

Del Rosario

BY THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Long-time MP United player Enrico Del Rosario has committed to play for the Alderson Broaddus University Battlers in the NCAA Division 2.

"I chose this school because the football program is amazing. I had a great conversation with the coach and it's very exciting. From the fields, players, and staff, it's all great," the 17-year-old player said.

"The most important is that they have the course and major that I want to take up and as early as freshman I can already experience hands on. In addition, the people around the campus are nice and I don't know why but there's really something about Alderson that got me hooked," he added.

Enrico's father and coach, Norman, said that he is pleased with his son's decision.

"Enrico told us his experience

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